HUNTER TRAVEL GUIDES

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

ALIVE!

SHOPPING HOTELS RESTAURANTS
NIGHTTIME ENTERTAINMENT DAYTIME FUN

Paris Permenter & John Bigley

VISIT…

Cayman Islands ALIVE!

2nd Edition

Paris Permenter & John Bigley

HUNTER

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Front Cover: The Cayman Islands is
one of the best dive destinations in the world.
Back Cover: Cruise ship off Grand Cayman
Photos courtesy of the Cayman Islands
Department of Tourism, unless otherwise noted.
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Index by Nancy Wolff

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About The Authors

John Bigley and Paris Permenter fell in love with the Caribbean over a dozen years ago and have turned their extensive knowledge of the region into an occupation. As professional travel writers and photographers, the pair contribute travel articles and photographs on the US and the Caribbean to many national consumer and trade publications. The husband-and-wife team have also written numerous guidebooks.

Paris and John are authors of several other Hunter guidebooks, including *Adventure Guide to the Cayman Islands, Adventure Guide to Jamaica*, *Jamaica: A Taste of the Island, Jamaica Alive!*, *Nassau & The Best of The Bahamas Alive!*, *Antigua, Barbuda, St. Kitts & Nevis Alive!*, and *Romantic Escapes in the Caribbean*.

Paris and John are also frequent television and radio talk show guests on the subject of travel. Both are members of the Society of American Travel Writers (SATW).

More about Paris and John's work can be found on their website, www.parisandjohn.com. The couple also edit *Lovetripper.com Romantic Travel Magazine,* www.lovetripper.com, featuring romantic and honeymoon destinations throughout the Caribbean and around the globe. When they're not on the road, the team resides in the Texas Hill Country near Austin.

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About the Alive Guides

Reliable, detailed and personally researched by knowledgeable authors, the *Alive!* series was founded by Harriet and Arnold Greenberg. This accomplished travel-writing team established the renowned bookstore, The Complete Traveller, at 199 Madison Avenue in New York City.

Introduction

Ready, Set, Go!

Whether you're a certified diver or a non-swimmer, the Cayman Islands are the place for you to act out your fantasies. If that means scuba diving à la Jacques Cousteau, shopping until you drop for baubles from around the globe, mingling with the jetset crowd at a luxurious resort, or just finding a quiet piece of sand to call your own for the day, these islands have got you covered. Just over an hour's flight from Miami and less than two hours from Houston, the Cayman Islands are one of the easiest Caribbean destinations to reach. That easy access combined with a high standard of living, low level of crime, and plenty of sun and sand, continues to draw record numbers of travelers. Many come again and again, and some returnees even invest in their own slice of paradise with one of the many condominiums located here. Others choose the islands, one of the top banking capitals in the world, as a base for their businesses and corporations.

We enjoy the Cayman Islands for a variety of reasons: the spectacular waters, the peace and quiet, and the rich marine and bird life. Shopping in George Town is another plus as is the variety of dining found along Seven Mile Beach.

Most especially, though, we enjoy the security and laid-back atmosphere of these islands. Dressing up for dinner usually means putting on a fresh T-shirt and pair of shorts. Beach strolls are uninterrupted by vendors of any kind. We've vacationed with our family in the islands and enjoyed the security of walking from our hotel to Seven Mile Beach restau-

rants, the ease of getting around the islands, and the home-away-from-home atmosphere.

Often just referred to as "Cayman," this destination is actually three distinct islands. Grand Cayman, the showy big brother, is home to most of the tourism, as well as the banking industry. The Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, each favored by scuba divers, as well as anglers (and those looking to get away from it all), are about 80 miles east-northeast of Grand Cayman and are separated from each other by seven miles of ocean. Cayman Brac covers about 14 square miles and Little Cayman, 10 square miles. Whatever island you select, you'll be happy. Grab some sunscreen and make your way to this luxurious destination where peddling is prohibited, and the living is definitely easy.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

Although it's often called "the Caymans," technically there is no such place. It's either "Cayman" or The Cayman Islands."

The Attractions

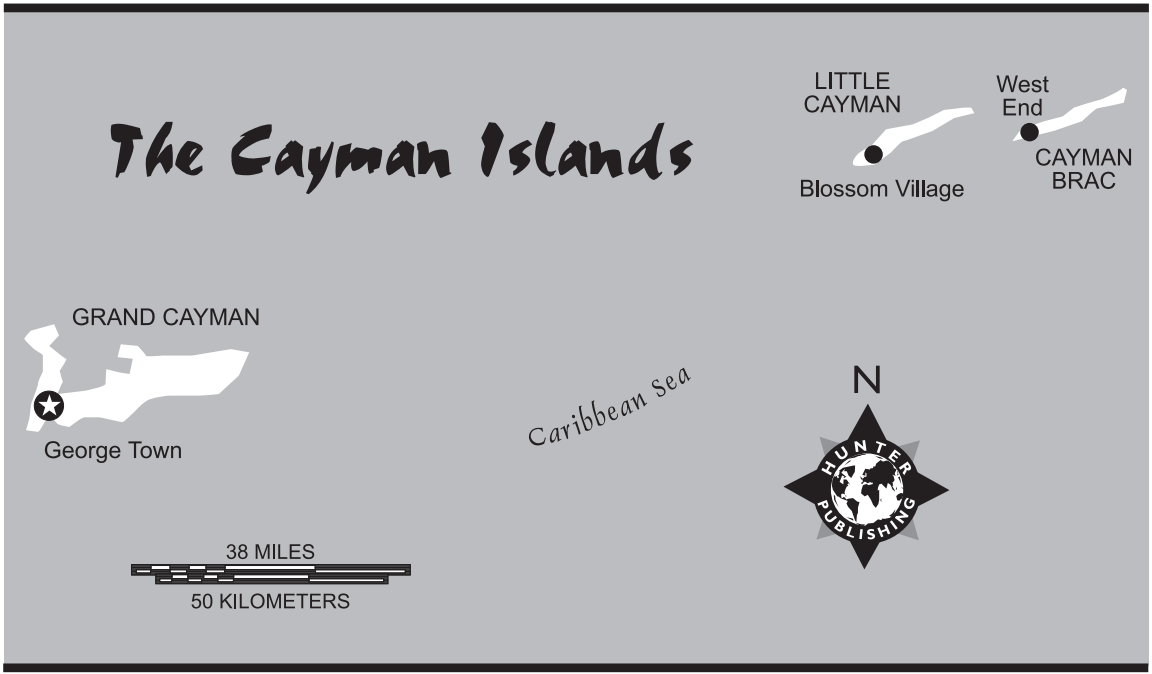
The Cayman Islands keep drawing vacationers, in spite of an exchange rate that's not in Americans' favor. The secret of these little islands? Here's why you might consider a vacation here:

- Great weather
- World-class scuba diving
- Duty-free shopping
- Easy access
- High level of safety
- Numerous angling opportunities
- Luxurious accommodations
- Fine dining
- A familiar atmosphere

The Best Island For You

So which island do you visit? They aren't identical triplets; each has its own distinct personality, one that you'll want to match to your own. If you are interested in duty-free shopping, gourmet dining, and luxurious accommodations (either hotels, condominiums, or villas), make **Grand Cayman** your base.

If, on the other hand, you plan to spend most of your time looking for that secluded strip of sand where you never see another set of footprints, then **Little**


The Cayman Islands
LITTLE CAYMAN
Blossom Village
West End
CAYMAN BRAC
GRAND CAYMAN
George Town
Caribbean Sea
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
38 MILES
50 KILOMETERS

Cayman should be your destination. This tiny island reaches just 40 feet above sea level at its highest point and is home to fewer than 100 residents. It's little changed from a century ago, a perfect place to get away from it all and spend your day on a bicycle pedaling along empty roads, snorkeling in pristine waters, or looking for that perfect beach.

If you are interested in watersports, you've got a tougher choice. Each of these islands is great for scuba divers, each well known in the world of diving. Bonefishing is also a top draw, especially on Little Cayman and **Cayman Brac**. Here you'll also find caving, bird-watching, and plenty of places for quiet walks.

Whichever your preference, you're never limited to just one destination in the Cayman Islands. Island-hopping is easy! These isles are much smaller than such easterly neighbors as Cuba and Jamaica, so don't choose only one area to explore – choose several!

The Alive Price Scales

Accommodations

Prices change as quickly as the sand shifts on a Caribbean beach. For that reason we avoid dollars-and-cents figures. Aside from the constantly changing prices, accommodations offer a wide variety of steps in their price scales as well: partial ocean view, full ocean view, oceanside, garden view – the list goes on and on. Each has its own price based on the month and the day of the week; when you make your reservation ask about all the categories. Our price scale is designed to give you a ballpark figure for a typical stay during peak season (December 15 through April 15). We've based these estimates on a

standard room for two persons. These figures don't take into account additional amenities such as meal plans, dive packages, etc. Prices are given in US dollars.

A 10% government tax is charged on all accommodations. Most hotels add gratuities ranging from 6% to 10% to this amount.

ACCOMMODATIONS PRICE SCALE	
Price scale is based on a standard room for two persons, per night.	
Inexpensive	under $100
Moderate	$100-$200
Expensive	$201-$300
Deluxe	over $300

All our hotel selections take major credit cards, are air-conditioned and have private baths, except in the case of the few guest houses where noted.

Restaurants

For dining, we've set up a price scale based on a three-course dinner, including appetizer or soup, an entrée, dessert and coffee. Cocktails and wine are extra. Price estimates are per person in US dollars.

★ TIP

Some restaurants add a 15% gratuity to the bill, so make sure you don't inadvertently tip twice.

DINING PRICE SCALE	
Pricing includes one entrée, with glass of wine and coffee.	
Inexpensive	under $25
Moderate	$25-$40
Expensive	over $40

A Capsule History

The 16th & 17th Centuries

Recorded Caymanian history begins, not with Grand Cayman, but with the Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. These islands were spotted by **Christopher Columbus** on his last journey to the New World on May 10, 1503. The explorer was actually on his way from Panama to Hispaniola (now home of the Dominican Republic and Haiti), when he was blown off-course, a detour that brought him within sight of the Sister Islands. Columbus named these islands *Las Tortugas* after the many sea turtles he found here. Later maps referred to the islands as *Lagartos*, probably a reference to the large lizards (possibly iguanas) seen on the island. Later, the name became *Caymanas* from the Carib Indian word for the marine crocodile.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

On a 1585 voyage, Sir Francis Drake reported sighting "great serpents called Caymanas, large like lizards, which are edible."

A few years later, a French map showed Cayman Brac with crocodiles in its waters and a manuscript described the reptiles. There's no need for modern visitors to worry about those toothy lizards. In 1993 an archeological dig did discover the skeleton of one on Grand Cayman, followed by another three years later on Cayman Brac, proving the existence of the crocodiles. But no living version has been spotted.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

Turtles are still a symbol of Cayman: the unofficial mascot is "Sir Turtle," a peg-legged, swashbuckling turtle. The turtle even appears on the Cayman Islands flag. Turtles drew sailors to the region for years in an attempt to prevent scurvy. Their ships visited the islands, and they slaughtered and salted the turtles to feed the crew.

The 18th & 19th Centuries

Slowly, human population rose and the first royal land grant in Grand Cayman came in 1734, marking the first permanent settlement. Through 1800, the population continued to grow with the arrival of shipwrecked mariners and immigrants from Jamaica. Cayman Brac and Little Cayman remained primarily uninhabited, visited only by turtle hunters during season (some records show the tiny islands were settled but residents were attacked by pirates). For years, the Cayman Islands served as a magnet for pirates. Buccaneers such as Sir Henry Morgan enjoyed its sunny shores for at least brief stopovers. During the American Revolution, American privateers challenged English shipping, aided by the war

ships and merchant ships of France, Spain, and Holland. By 1782, peace came to the seas and buccaneering drew to a close. In 1832 the citizens of the Cayman Islands met at what is today the oldest remaining structure on the island: St. James Castle. Remembered as the "Birthplace of Democracy" in Cayman, this site witnessed the first vote to create a legislature of representatives.

WRECK OF THE TEN SAILS

According to research, in 1794, a great maritime tragedy took place on Grand Cayman. "The Wreck of the Ten Sails" is legendary, recalling the tragedy of the *Cordelia*, part of a convoy of merchant ships headed to Britain from Jamaica. The *Cordelia* ran aground on the reef at the East End and frantically sent a signal to the other ships to warn them off the dangerous coral. Sadly, the signal was misunderstood and, one by one, the tall ships sailed into the reef. Residents of East End were later commended by King George III for their quick actions that left no life unsaved. Various stories explain that the king granted the islands freedom from conscription, and other versions say that the king gave the islands freedom from taxation.

By 1835, slavery had been outlawed by Great Britain and the islands led a quiet existence, many of the population working as turtle fishermen or building turtling boats. The sea provided a livelihood for most residents, who then traded for agricultural items that couldn't be grown on the island. Palm thatch was transformed into marine rope and offered a good barter for daily staples. During this

time, shipbuilding became a major industry as well. (Palm thatch played such an important role in Cayman's history it even appears on the Caymanian flag.)

The Islands Today

For the next century, the Cayman Islands remained relatively isolated. Residents continued their old traditions but hurricanes, tidal waves, and a depletion of the green turtle supply forced some residents to sail to Cuba, Honduras, and Nicaragua to earn a living. The merchant seamen navigated the waters and this sustained the economy of the islands until tourism and finance rose to prominence in the 20th century. During this time the islands were cut off geographically and had limited communication with the outside world until the first wireless station was built in 1935.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

These islands are a dependent territory or a British Crown Colony of the UK. They are led by the Governor, an appointee of the Queen. The Governor leads the Executive Council, which includes three official and four elected members. The unicameral legislature consists of 15 members. The government offices are on Elgin Street in George Town.

The plunge into the 20th century was aided by commissioner **Sir Allen Cardinall**, who served from 1934 to 1940. Linking the public buildings of Grand Cayman with a network of roads, the commissioner was also the first public figure to recognize the tour-

ism potential of the islands, even noting that this area held "the most perfect bathing beaches in the West Indies." In 1953, the first airfield in the Cayman Islands was completed with the Owens Roberts Airport on Grand Cayman. A year later, an airstrip opened on Cayman Brac. Within three years tourism began taking hold on Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman. By 1957, dive operator Bob Soto began the islands' first recreational diving business and introduced the world to these pristine waters. The islands continued as a dependency of Jamaica, both under the protectorate of Great Britain until 1962 when Jamaica became independent. The Caymanians had a far different view of the Union Jack than their Jamaican neighbors, however; in 1962 a vote overwhelmingly favored remaining a British dependency.

He Hath Founded It Upon The Seas

The motto of the Cayman Islands, "He hath founded it upon the seas," describes this destination perfectly. The sea is an integral part of life here, both for residents and vacationers. And it is never more than a short distance away, no matter where you are on the islands.

The People

The three Cayman Islands boast a total population of just over 35,600, most of whom live on Grand Cayman. About 34,280 people reside on the largest island, followed by 1,200 residents on Cayman Brac and a scant 120 people on Little Cayman.

It's a varied population, with cultures from around the globe. About a third of all residents are non-Caymanians. Most of those are from the US, Can-

ada, the UK and nearby Jamaica, although a total of 113 nationalities are represented.

Environment

These islands are low and fairly dry, especially when compared to neighboring Jamaica. On Grand Cayman, the elevation is only about 60 feet above sea level at its highest point. The Sister Islands are each amoeba-shaped and small. Cayman Brac soars to a nosebleed level, by Caymanian standards, of 140 feet above sea level.

These three islands are actually the peaks of a submarine mountain range, the **Cayman Ridge**, part of a chain running from Cuba to near Belize. The islands are in fact limestone outcroppings with little soil, so vegetation is not as lush as on some islands.

There are two types of limestone: **bluff limestone**, formed about 30 million years ago, and **ironshore**, created 120,000 years ago, combining limestone with coral, mollusk shell, and marl. Ironshore accounts for the pocked surface that holds little pockets of soil (and makes walking barefoot just about impossible) on much of these islands. You won't hear us complaining about the rough ground here, though. The limestone and little soil means that there's very little runoff. The result? Crystal-clear waters directly offshore.

Flora

The Cayman Islands are not as lush as neighboring Jamaica but still boast a good variety of tropical flora and fauna. The **wild banana orchid** is the national flower, one of 27 indigenous orchid species. Blooming in April and May, it is found on all three islands in different varieties. Five of the orchid spe-

cies here are found nowhere else. The national tree is the **silver thatch palm**. The palm has a silvery underside with light green upper fronds. For all its beauty, this plant has far more than ornamental value, though. It has been used by islanders to form roofing, belts, baskets, rope, and more. Palm rope has long been a bartering tool, traded for staples.

The **mango** is the most plentiful fruit in the Cayman Islands, ripening in the month of June and continuing to produce through September. The islands harvest about 65,000 pounds of this tropical treasure every season. There are 15 different varieties of mango; you'll find it at roadside stands and farmers' markets.

> **WARNING!**
>
> **Manchineel** trees present an unusual danger. These trees, often found near water, have highly acidic leaves and fruit. Rainwater dropping off the leaves can cause painful burns and the tree's tiny, poisonous apples will also burn when stepped on. In most resorts, manchineel trees have been removed or are clearly marked, often with signs and with trunks painted red.

Fauna

Animals & Reptiles

The Cayman Islands don't have a lot of wildlife, but there are some small animals that can be seen.

A shy resident of these islands is the **agouti**, a rabbit-sized rodent once hunted for meat. Intro-

duced by the early settlers, the agouti is a Central American native. Once kept as a pet and raised for food, today the rodent is rarely seen in the wild. A family of agoutis can be viewed at the Cayman Turtle Farm on Grand Cayman. The agouti has long, thin legs, hoof-like claws with three toes on its hind feet and five toes on its forefeet. The **hickatee**, a freshwater turtle, is found in freshwater and brackish ponds here and in neighboring Cuba.

Although the Cayman Islands have no poisonous snakes, you might spot one of the harmless indigenous species such as the **grass snake**, which feeds on frogs and lizards. Their numbers have been reduced by the **mongoose**, which was introduced to control rats. (Unfortunately, rats and mongoose keep different hours, so the mongoose feed on the snake – the natural predator of the rat – causing the rat population to swell.) A favorite sighting is the **blue iguana**, a vegetarian species that can grow to five feet long.

Little Cayman is home to over 2,000 iguanas (check out the "iguana crossing" signs around the island). On Grand Cayman, you can see a large male on display in the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park.

Birds

Bird lovers flock to these islands to see parrots, ducks, cuckoos, herons, and other species. One of the most exotic species is the national bird, the **Cayman parrot**. Look for these birds in early mornings and late afternoons when they return to roost in the stumps of palm trees. (Sadly there are no parrots on Little Cayman. That bird population disappeared in 1932 with the Great Hurricane and never returned.) These parrots eat fruit, flowers and seeds in the dry woodlands.

Another commonly seen bird is the **Zenaida dove**, a cooing dove that feeds on dried seeds. The colorful **bananaquit**, a yellow and black bird that's not shy about begging for crumbs (and its favorite treat: sugar) is another common sight.

Red-footed boobies are easily sighted on Little Cayman. Here you'll find 7,000 boobies, about 30% of the Caribbean population. This beige bird, about 25 inches long, nests high in the trees. Its young are pure white. Boobies construct a rough nest of sticks that's easy to spot.

Magnificent frigate birds are also sighted around these islands. With a wingspan of over seven feet and wings sharply angled like boomerangs, the black bird is fairly easy to spot as it soars high over the sea.

Little Cayman in particular is a favorite with birders, who come to the tiny isle for the chance to spot **West Indian whistling ducks**, **cattle egrets**, **black necked stilts**, **snowy egrets**, and **tricoloured herons**, as well as the red footed boobies, magnificent frigate birds and others. Cayman Brac is favored for its **parrot** viewing, with a large reserve dedicated to these colorful birds. Grand Cayman is also home to several protected areas and ponds where both migrating and resident birds thrive.

Undersea Life

These islands are a destination known for their underwater attractions, with many of the best dive sites on the globe, waters with a clarity second to none, a diversity of dives to interest even the most jaded diver, and a variety of marine life that can't be beat. Divers and snorkelers will find marine playgrounds around each of the islands. Fishermen

wrestle wily **bonefish** in the shallow flats or struggle with **blue marlin**, **yellowfin tuna**, or **wahoo** from deep-water charter boats. Those looking for a more leisurely pace enjoy sunset sails or long walks along powdery beaches.

The green sea turtle is an integral part of Cayman culture and a symbol of these islands. Even in their current protected state, only one turtle out of 10,000 eggs laid reaches maturity. The turtles are threatened by birds, animals, marine life, and, of course, humans. Even so, the turtle has continued to thrive in Cayman waters.

Green sea turtles can stay underwater for several days without surfacing for air. The Cayman Islands have taken strict measures to protect the marine life of these waters. Today the sea turtle is protected and no one may disturb, molest, or take turtles in Cayman waters without a license.

Each of the Cayman Islands is surrounded by coral reefs, producing some of the best snorkeling and scuba diving in the Caribbean. Divers have a chance at spotting a wide array of marine life, partly because of the deep water nearby. The Cayman Trough, the deepest waters in the Caribbean, lies between here and Jamaica, with depths that plunge into inky blackness over four miles beneath the ocean's surface.

WARNING!

Whenever you are snorkeling or diving, watch out for fire coral. There are many varieties, all edged with white. If you accidentally brush against the coral it will defend itself and burn you like fire!

Climate

The weather in these islands can be summed up in one word: perfect. Blessed with cooling trade winds, the Cayman Islands enjoy a temperate climate year-round. You'll find the temperatures warm enough to enjoy a dip in the sea all year through, but cool enough to encourage you to get out and explore the island, stroll George Town for a few hours of shopping, and dine outside comfortably. There's no need to run from air-conditioned car to air-conditioned hotel lobby on these islands.

TEMPERATURE & RAINFALL		
Month	Avg. Temperature (Low/High)	Avg. Rainfall (inches)
January	75°/83°	3.1
February	74°/83°	1.3
March	75°/85°	0.8
April	77°/86°	0.8
May	77°/87°	3.1
June	78°/87°	6.7
July	77°/87°	9.2
August	78°/88°	3.7
September	78°/88°	6.2
October	77°/87°	9.2
November	75°/85°	7.9
December	74°/83°	5.2

The coolest month is February. July and August are the hottest, with highs approaching 90□ (although high humidity levels can make it feel much warmer).

Water temperatures vary slightly during the winter months. In the cooler season, the sea ranges from 78□ to 82□, rising about five degrees during the summer months. Rainfall varies with the seasons. Generally, rainstorms are heavy but brief. The islands receive about 46 inches of precipitation annually. The driest times are March and April.

Hurricanes

Mention weather and the Caribbean in the same sentence and, quite predictably, the topic of hurricanes arises. These deadly storms are officially a threat from June through November, although the greatest danger is during the later months, basically August through October (September is the worst).

Hurricanes are defined as revolving storms with wind speeds of 75 mph or greater. These counterclockwise storms begin as waves off the west coast of Africa and work their way across the Atlantic, some eventually gaining strength and becoming tropical depressions (under 40 mph) or tropical storms (40 to 74 mph). Excellent warning systems keep islanders posted on the possibility of oncoming storms. Radio Cayman broadcasts current storm reports in the islands. Keep in mind, however, that the Caribbean is a large region. We were on Grand Cayman when Hurricane Luis picked up strength on its way to batter St. Martin and Antigua in 1995, but we never saw surf over ankle-high. More recently, we were on Grand Cayman while a hurricane battered Jamaica causing rainslides and flooding. The result on Grand Cayman was occasional wind gusts until the hurri-

cane began its movement over the island, when it weakened and produced nothing more extensive than rain.

TIP

Want to check out today's forecast? Have a look at the weather page (www.caymanislands.ky).

Planning Your Trip

When to Visit

The peak (read: most expensive) time to visit the Cayman Islands is from mid-December through mid-April. This is the busiest time of year, a season when Americans and Canadians are looking for a warm weather refuge, if only for a few days, and when hotels and condominiums can charge their highest rates.

Summer months are the cheapest – look for rooms at 40% to 50% off their peak rates. Late summer can bring the possibility of hurricanes, but it's a minor threat, and good forecasting systems keep travelers aware of any impending storms days in advance.

Late summer (August and September) traditionally is a slow season throughout the Caribbean due to increased storm threat, warm weather throughout the US, and back-to-school preparations. The Cayman Islands, however, is offering plenty of summer temptation with deep discounts on airfare, hotels, attractions, restaurants, watersports, and auto rentals.

You'll find equally pleasant weather conditions in the "shoulder" seasons – fall and spring. Prices are somewhat lower than peak rates during these

months, and reservations are easier to obtain. In the fall, the busiest time is late October, when the annual Pirates Week blowout fills hotels with merrymakers.

WARNING!

Grand Cayman is a favorite spring break destination for many college students so, unless you enjoy a serious party atmosphere, avoid late March and early April. While the crowding is not as severe as that found in Nassau or Cancún, it's enough to keep Seven Mile Beach bustling. Spring breakers don't hit Little Cayman and Cayman Brac so these islands maintain their peaceful atmosphere year-round.

For the past several years, the Department of Tourism has offered extensive **discount programs** during the summer and through the end of October. A recent promotion, available only through travel agents, was "Get Re-Energized in the Cayman Islands." Discounts included a 20% fare reduction for direct flights on Cayman Airways, Delta, Air Jamaica, and American Airlines. Accommodation discounts were available on each of the three islands. As part of the promotion, many properties allowed kids to stay free and families to buy four nights and get a fifth night free. The package also offered discounts on meals at many hotels and stand-alone restaurants, discounted admission at some attractions, and for car and Jeep rentals. While the details of each summer's promotion varies, it's worth keeping this in mind when you plan your travels.

Entry Requirements

US and Canadian citizens need to show a **passport**, or other proof of citizenship such as a **birth certificate**. Visitors must also show a **return airline ticket**. Travelers can remain in the islands for up to six months; to extend your visit you must obtain permission by writing the **Chief Immigration Officer**, Department of Immigration, P.O. Box 1098, Grand Cayman. On-island, the immigration offices are found at the Government Administration Building on Elgin Avenue in George Town.

Visas are not required of citizens from member countries of the Commonwealth, the US and Canada, or from Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Irish Republic, Italy, Japan, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, San Marino, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

Customs

US Customs

The Cayman Islands are a duty-free port, so after 48 hours out of the States, Americans can return home with up to US $400 in purchases without paying duty. (Families can pool their exemptions: a husband and wife can take an exemption of $800; a family of four, $1,600.)

Each visitor can return with one carton of cigarettes and two liters of alcohol (only those visitors age 21 and over). Additional liquor purchases result in a duty approximately 15% above the duty-free cost.

Turtle products – shells, steaks, lotion, and shell jewelry – sold on the island cannot be brought back into or through the US. Skip these items at the Cayman Turtle Farm gift shop.

TIP

Before your trip, get a copy of the *Know Before You Go* brochure (Publication 512) from the US Customs Service at your airport or by writing the US Customs Service, PO Box 7407, Washington, DC 20044, www.customs.ustreas.gov.

Canadian Customs

If you are a Canadian citizen, you can return home with CI $300 in goods duty free if you have been away from Canada for seven days or longer (see page 31 for exchange rates). This exemption is good once per year. If you've been away more than 48 hours, you can claim an additional exemption of CI $100 per calendar quarter. (You can't claim the yearly and the quarterly exemptions within the same quarter.)

What to Pack

We're happy to say that you won't need to pack a steamer trunk for a vacation in the Cayman Islands. No matter what your planned activities, you'll find that these are casual islands. Unlike some other Caribbean islands, which recall a more proper British standard of dress (especially during high season), Cayman adheres to American standards of casual comfort, due in large part to the high number of American ex-pats that now call this land home. Shorts and T-shirts are the uniform of these islands. Be sure to bring along at least two swimsuits (the high humidity means that clothing takes extra time to dry). Swimwear is appropriate only for the beach, so you will want a cover-up, no matter how casual, for lunches and quick excursions.

Evenings are relaxed, too. We've worn shorts and sandals to many al fresco restaurants on these islands. There are some establishments on Grand Cayman where you'll feel more comfortable in long pants, a collared shirt, or a simple dress; we've indicated these in the text. Nightlife is also laid-back – leave the sequined dress for a trip to San Juan or Aruba. Sundresses, polo shirts, and sandals are seen in the islands' nightclubs and comedy clubs; most evening activity, however, takes place in the beach bars, where you'll feel most at home in those shorts once again.

THE BASICS

- Proof of citizenship
- Airline tickets
- Snorkel, fins, mask and swimsuit(s)
- Sunscreen, aloe vera gel, first aid kit
- Cameras, flash and film (we recommend an inexpensive underwater camera, too)
- Drivers license for car rental
- Prescriptions (must be in original bottles)
- Mini-address book
- Divers: Don't forget your "C" card, as well as any gear you typically bring along: compass, dive tables, dive computer, weight belt, mesh bag, dive boots, logbook, and proof of insurance.
- Anglers: Pack a pair of polarized sunglasses, helpful on the glaring flats for spotting those wily bonefish.

Check with the airlines for carryon limitations and security requirements, including check-in time.

And if you forget something? Don't worry. Grand Cayman has everything you'll need – clothing, medicines, watersports gear, camera equipment, you name it – albeit at prices somewhat higher than you might find at home.

TIP

If you'll be making Little Cayman or Cayman Brac your home base, we recommend double-checking your packing list. Remember, these are remote islands with few stores. You'll find the basics, but the selection will be slim.

Information Sources

On-Island

When on Grand Cayman, visit the **Cayman Islands Department of Tourism** office at Elgin Avenue, Cricket Square in George Town and pick up brochures and other information, or call ☎ 800-346-3313 or 345-949-0623, fax 345-949-4053. You'll also find information booths with maps and brochures at **Owen Roberts International Airport** and the **North Terminal** cruise ship dock.

TIP

Be sure to stop by the tourist office to pick up 2-for-1 dinner coupons and shopping discounts.

On The Internet

The Cayman Islands Department of Tourism has two excellent websites, **www.caymanislands.ky** and **www.divecayman.ky**. Here you'll find the latest Cayman news and current weather conditions, as well as tourism information including: hotels and condominiums; restaurants; transportation; attractions; fishing; scuba diving; snorkeling; group and meeting facilities; watersports; information on the Sister Islands; visitor services; links to other Cayman sites; an e-mail link to the DOT; and a brochure request form.

Tourist Offices

Although three out of four Cayman Islands visitors come from the United States, the European market makes up a significant segment of arrivals. Regardless of the home base, the target market for the Cayman Islands remains the same: "affluent travelers with a sense of adventure," according to Jonathan Sloan, Senior Account Manager with McCluskey & Associates, the London-based public relations firm for the Cayman Islands. UK tour operators include Airtours, Airwaves, American Connection, Barefoot Traveller, British Airways Holidays, Caribbean Connection, Caribtours, Elegant Resorts, Getaway Vacations, Goldenjoy Holidays, Harlequin Worldwide Travel, Hayes and Jarvis, International Charters, Key to America, Kuoni, North America Travel Service, Regal Holidays, Scuba Safaris, Seligo, Sport Abroad, Sunworld Beach Villas, Thomas Cook Holidays, Tradewinds, Virgin Holidays, and Worldwide Fishing Safaris. "The list for US and European wholesalers is quite extensive and includes all the major recognized wholesalers," says Sloan.

The Frankfurt office of the Cayman Department of Tourism works with a variety of tour operators, including Aeroworld GMBH, Airtours International, Blue Marine International Reisen GMBH, Dertour Deutsches Reisenbuero, Karibik Inside, Terraplan Karibik, Airturs Austria, Meine Reise, Poncho Tours, Travac Austria, Carib Tours, Imholz Reisen AG, Kuoni Reisen, and others.

Before your trip, contact the tourism office nearest you for brochures and information.

US & Canada

- **Northeast**: 420 Lexington Avenue, Suite 2733, New York, NY 10170; ☎ 212-682-5582.
- **Northwest**: 9525 W. Bryn Mawr Avenue, Suite 160, Rosemont, IL 60018; ☎ 708-678-6446.
- **Southeast**: 6100 Blue Lagoon Drive, Suite 150, Miami, FL 33126-2085, ☎ 305-266-2300.
- **Southwest**: Two Memorial City Plaza, 820 Gessner, Suite 170, Houston, TX 77024; ☎ 713-461-1317.
- **West**: 3440 Wilshire Boulevard, Suite 1202, Los Angeles, CA 90010; ☎ 213-738-1968.
- **Canada**: 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 306, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 1K5; ☎ 416-485-1550.

Overseas

- **England**: Cayman Islands Tourism, 6 Arlington Street, London, SW1A 1RE, England, ☎ 011-44-207-491-7771
- **Germany, Austria & Switzerland**: Marketing Services International, Walter Stoehrer and Partner GmbH, Johanna Melber-Weg, 12D-60599, Frankfurt, Germany, ☎ 069-60-320-94, fax 069-62-92-64

- **Italy**: G & A Martinengo, Via Fratelli Ruffini 9, 20 123 Milano, Italy, ☎ 02-4801-2068, fax 02-635-32
- **Spain**: Sergat EspaA SL, Pau Casals 4, 08021 Barcelona, Spain, ☎ 93-414-0210, fax 93-201-8657
- **France & Scandinavia**: KPMG Axe Consultants, 12, rue de Madrid, 75005, Paris, France, ☎ 33-1-53-424136, fax 33-1-43-873285
- **Argentina**: REITUR (Representaciones International Turisticas), Esmeralda 847 Piso Of. "F"(1007), Buenos Aires, Argentina, ☎ 54-1-315-0485, fax 54-1-315-0038

Getting Here

By Air

Most air travelers arrive in the Cayman Islands at Grand Cayman's **Owen Roberts International Airport**, a modern facility that includes a tourist board desk with brochures and maps, as well as plenty of duty-free shopping. The airport received a substantial facelift just a few years ago to enlarge and improve all the visitor areas, as well as baggage claim and customs.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

Low-cost flights to Grand Cayman can be obtained through some charter companies during high season. Ask your travel agent to check with charter and tour companies offering air-only and air-land packages.

AIRLINES

Cayman Airways . . . . . ☎ 800-G-CAYMAN or 345-949-2311, www.caymanairways.com

Air Canada . . . . . ☎ 888-247-2262 www.aircanada.ca

American Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-433-7300 www.aa.com

Continental Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-231-0856 www.continental.com

Delta Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-325-1999 www.delta.com

Northwest Airlines . . . . . ☎ 800-225-2525 www.nwa.com

USAirways International . . . ☎ 800-447-4747 www.usair.com

United . . . . . ☎ 800-241-6522, www.ual.com

Air Jamaica . . . . . ☎ 800-523-5585 www.airjamaica.com

British Airways . . . . . ☎ 800-247-9297 www.british-airways.com

By Cruise Ship

Cruise ship passengers arrive by tender in George Town at either the **North** or **South terminal** (just steps apart). These terminals are right in the heart of George Town, just a stroll from shopping and dining. The clean waterfront brims with shops featuring fine jewelry, black coral, artwork, leather goods, and other goodies.

Grand Cayman limits the number of cruise ships in port at any one time to three or four, with a maximum capacity of 6,000 passengers. This limit ensures that visitors have a good experience while on

the island and never feel overcrowded in George Town. For information on cruises to the Cayman Islands, call the cruise lines listed below.

CRUISE LINES

Carnival Cruises. . . . . ☎ 888-CARNIVAL
www.carnivalcruise.com

Celebrity Cruises . . . . . ☎ 888-313-8883
www.celebritycruises.com

Costa . . . . . ☎ 800-33-COSTA
www.costacruises.com

Cunard Lines. . . . . ☎ 800-7-CUNARD
www.cunard.com

Fred Olsen . . . . . ☎ 01-473-29-22-00
www.fredolsen.co.uk

Hapag Lloyd. . . . . ☎ 800-334-2724
www.hapag-lloyd.com

Holland America . . . . . ☎ 800-426-0327
www.hollandamerica.com

Norwegian Cruise Line . . . ☎ 800-327-7030
www.ncl.com

P & O Cruises (In US book through Princess Tours) . . . . . ☎ 206-336-6000
www.pocruises.com

Princess Cruises . . . . . ☎ 800-PRINCESS
www.princesscruises.com

Regal . . . . . ☎ 800-270-7245
www.regalcruises.com

Royal Caribbean Cruises. . ☎ 888-313-8883
www.royalcaribbean.com

Cruise visitors arriving for the day will find drivers outside the cruise terminals. These "guides" offer trips to Seven Mile Beach, as well as island tours. You'll find plenty of organized tours (typically to the

Turtle Farm, Hell, and Seven Mile Beach). To experience the island without the rush of a crowd, consider hiring a driver by the hour. A taxi stand is at the terminal and a knowledgeable driver will take up to four persons for US $37.50 per hour. If you'd rather spend your time on the beach, take a taxi directly to Seven Mile Beach, about three miles from town. Taxi fare runs about US $4 per person each way; a steady flow of taxis from the hotels to town insures that you'll have no difficulty returning to the ship before departure time.

TIP

Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday are generally the busiest days for cruise ships in George Town. To avoid crowds, hit the beach or other attractions on those days.

Inter-Island Travel

Many travelers, especially those returning to Grand Cayman, spend at least a day or two exploring the Sister Islands of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. Although the distance is too far to be covered by ferry, inter-island flights are relatively inexpensive and easy to arrange. Flights are available through **Island Air** (☎ 345-949-5252, fax 345-949-7044; www.islandair.ky, iair@candw.ky) with scheduled twice-daily service between Grand Cayman, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. Flight time is about 45 minutes. Fares from Grand Cayman to Little Cayman or Cayman Brac are US $154 round-trip or US $110 for the day-trip (there and back in one day). Flights between Cayman Brac and Little Cayman are US $40 round-trip. Special fares are available for children under 12. Flights are also available

from Grand Cayman aboard **Cayman Airways** (☎ 800-422-9626).

Practicalities

Money Matters

Currency

The **Cayman Islands dollar** is legal tender. The dollar is exchanged at a rate fixed to the US dollar (CI $1 equals US $1.25). The Cayman Islands dollar is issued in units of $100, $50, $25, $10, $5 and $1 with coins of 25¢, 10¢, 5¢ and 1¢.

CURRENCY CONVERSIONS	
CI $ TO US $	US $ TO CI $
1 = 1.25	1 = .80
50 = 62.50	50 = 40.00
75 = 93.75	75 = 60.00
CI $ TO CAN $	CAN $ TO CI $
1 = 1.88	1 = .53
50 = 94.08	50 = 26.56
75 = 141.12	75 = 39.84
CI $ TO UK £	UK £ TO CI $
1 = 0.86	1 = 1.16
50 = 43.10	50 = 57.92
75 = 64.68	75 = 86.88

TIP

There's no need to exchange your money upon arrival. US dollars are readily accepted on the Cayman Islands. You may receive change back in Caymanian currency.

Credit Cards

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club, and Access are commonly accepted; Discover is accepted at some establishments.

Telephone & Internet

The Cayman Islands have excellent telecommunications service thanks to **Cable & Wireless (Cayman Islands) Ltd.** You'll find dependable, modern phone and Internet service on each of the islands.

Due to the influence of the banking industry, reliable telecommunications have long been a necessity; these islands once had the largest per-capita number of telex machines in the world. Today you can count on **fax** services at just about every accommodation in the islands.

Telephone Connections

The **area code** for the Cayman Islands is ☎ 345. US Sprint, AT&T and MCI Direct services are available for dialing from the islands to home. Access numbers are:

US Sprint . . . . . ☎ 888-366-4663
MCI Direct . . . . . ☎ 800-624-1000
AT&T USA Direct . . . . . ☎ 800-872-2881

The cost for local calls within Grand Cayman is 9¢ for the first three minutes, 3¢ for each additional minute. Calls within either Little Cayman or Cayman Brac are charged a flat fee of 9¢ per minute. Calls between Grand Cayman and the Sister Islands are 3¢ per minute. Calls between Little Cayman and Cayman Brac are 9¢ per minute. You'll find many public phones throughout the islands. Some accept coins only; others accept phone cards only; some accept both. You can purchase phone cards in denominations of $10, $15 and $25 at the Cable and Wireless office in Anderson Square on Shedden Road in George Town, at the Cayman Brac office, and at most service stations.

Internet Connections

You'll find good service here. Connections can be made by dialing (locally) ☎ 345-976-4638; the cost is CI 12¢ per minute. You'll find an internet café along Seven Mile Beach at **P.D.'s Pub**, Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road, ☎ 345-949-7144.

Time Zone

The Cayman Islands are in the **Eastern time zone**, five hours behind Greenwich Mean Time. The Cayman Islands do not observe daylight saving time.

Electrical Current

Throughout the islands, the current is 120 volts at 60 cycles. US appliances will not need adapters. The standard US flat pin prongs are used.

Crime

We're happy to say that the Cayman Islands enjoy a low crime rate. With the islands' excellent economic position, crime is rare. You can walk on public beaches or stroll along busy West Bay Street after an evening meal without worrying about being mugged. But no destination is completely crime-free. Use the same common sense precautions you would exercise at home. Don't walk alone on the beach at night. Also, don't leave valuables on the beach while swimming. Invest in a waterproof pouch for keys and necessities and lock other items in your car or hotel room.

★ TIP

Many of the Cayman Islands' rental vehicles are open-air Jeeps; to guard against theft leave your possessions in your hotel room when you venture out.

Drugs

Be warned that the islands have strict anti-drug laws. Marijuana is an illegal substance and possession can result not only in large fines but also in a prison term. There is no hassling by beach vendors, and we have never been bothered by a drug dealer, which can be a problem on many other islands.

Media

Television

At most hotels and condominiums, you'll find as many television channels as you would at home,

thanks to satellite broadcasts. The islands also have three local television stations: **CITN** (channel 27), **CTS** (channel 24) and **CCT**, Cayman Christian Television (channel 21).

Radio

Four local radio stations can be enjoyed as you drive around the islands. **Radio Cayman**, owned by the government, is broadcast on all the islands. **Z-99** broadcasts on Grand Cayman and **ICCI-FM**, at the International College of the Cayman Islands, also serves the largest island. Christian radio is heard on **Heaven 97**.

Newspapers

Grand Cayman has a daily paper, the *Caymanian Compass*. You'll also be able to pick up US newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, and *The Wall Street Journal* at newsstands and hotel shops.

TIP

Avoid the high cost of imported newspapers by asking your hotel or condominium if they subscribe to *The New York Times* fax service, a digest of the day's news.

Culture & Customs

What to Expect

The Cayman Islands has a very American atmosphere; you'll feel at home instantly. Recognize, though, that there are some subtle cultural differ-

ences. With its long history of British rule, there is a slightly more formal atmosphere in personal relations – people are often introduced as Mr. or Ms. Also, as in most of the Caribbean, it's traditional to greet others with "Good morning" or "Good afternoon" and a smile rather than just launching into your question or request.

Language

English is the primary language in the Cayman Islands, and it is spoken with a unique lilt, one a little different from accents in other areas of the Caribbean. It's a reminder of the islands' earliest ancestors with Welsh, Scottish, and English heritage. You'll often hear Jamaican patois as well.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

Although English is the official language, you will quickly notice that it follows British, not American, spellings in words such as *colour*, *travellers*, *harbour* and *centre*.

Holidays

During public holidays, expect all government offices and most retail establishments to close.

The following list represents all the official government holidays, but that is by no means the end of the partying on these islands. There are special events throughout the year. For more information on Cayman festivals, call the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism at ☎ 800-346-3313.

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

New Year's Day . . . . . January 1
Ash Wednesday . . . . . February
Good Friday . . . . . March/April
Easter Monday . . . . . March/April
Discovery Day . . . . . May 19
Queen's Birthday . . . . . June 16
Constitution Day . . . . . 1st Monday in July
Remembrance Day . . . . . November 10
Christmas Day . . . . . December 25
Boxing Day . . . . . December 26

Festivals & Events

The three largest festivals in the year are **Pirates Week** (October), **Million Dollar Month** (June), and **Aviation Week** (June).

Pirates Week is the biggest blowout, and during this time, accommodations can be at a premium. Bring your costumes, matey, for this festival celebrating the buccaneering heritage of the islands. You can dress as a pirate or a wench or just enjoy the fireworks, parades, tournaments, and other planned activities. The event also includes many chances to eat local foods such as stewed conch and fish tea. For more on the festival, see www.piratesweekfestival.com.

February

Annual Mardi Gras Parade. . . . . Little Cayman

March

Annual St. Patrick's Day Jog . . . Grand Cayman

April

Cayfest. . . . . Grand Cayman
The National Culture and Arts Festival runs for the whole month! Cayfest also has events on Cayman Brac.

Batabano Carnival. . . . . GrandCayman
Live music, a parade and Caymanian food. Bring your costume!

Cayman Islands International Fishing Tournament. . . . . Grand Cayman

June

Cayman Islands International Aviation Week . . . . . Grand Cayman

Million Dollar Month . . . . . **

July

Taste of Cayman . . . . . Grand Cayman

October

Pirates Week. . . . . Grand Cayman
Be sure to bring your pirate's costume for this blowout!

Johnnie Walker Golf Tournament . . . . . Grand Cayman

The Real Cayman

Many visitors find that Cayman festivals present excellent opportunities to get to know the "real" Cayman Islands, apart from the glitz of Seven Mile Beach, branded properties like the Westin, Hyatt and the Ritz-Carlton, fast food restaurants, and its glamorous past as a set for the movie *The Firm*, starring Tom Cruise.

The festivals remind travelers that the Cayman Islands also has a real history and a culture all its own. With permanent settlement dating back to the early 1700s, the islands have long been home to a people who relied on the sea many years before tourism reached these shores. In those times, residents looked to the sea and to the island's indigenous plants for their diet, used the plants to create everything from rope to roofing material, and developed dances and music to celebrate when the work day was done.

Cuisine, Crafts & Carnival

Several attractions, restaurants, and tours throughout the islands remind visitors of the history of the islands – first named *Las Tortugas* by Christopher Columbus because of its large population of sea turtles. The marine creatures are still an important symbol of the islands. For years, turtling remained an important part of the Cayman economy. Today the best look at these creatures is at the **Cayman Turtle Farm** (☎ 345-949-3893, www.turtle.ky), the world's only such farm.

The turtle has also long played a part in the Cayman diet, and today turtle still shows up on the menus of many restaurants that feature Caymanian dishes. George Town's **Lobster Pot** (☎ 345-949-2736), **Benjamin's Roof Restaurant** (☎ 345-945-4080), the North Side Inn's **Red Ginger** (☎ 345-947-1431) and the elegant **Grand Old House** (☎ 345-949-9333) are a few of the restaurants that offer turtle entrées. For a more casual dining experience, eateries like George Town's **Billy's Place Restaurant** (☎ 345-949-0470) and **The Heritage Café** (Boggy Sand Road, West Bay, no phone) serve Caymanian dishes such as fish tea, conch stew, and oxtail.

Travelers who would like to experience a traditional Caymanian dinner in the privacy of their condominium or villa can hire a private caterer. On Grand Cayman, Burton Ebanks at **AA Catering** (☎ 345-949-7222 or 949-6598, aatours@candw.ky or chef@candw.ky) can prepare a traditional meal for visitors. The price for one to six adults (over the age of 12) is US $181.25. Additional charges include the cost of groceries, a 15% service charge, and a shopping charge of US $50. Visitors who are interested in learning how to cook Caymanian-style are welcome to watch the chef and learn preparation tips.

Caymanian dishes are also spotlighted at local festivals. The **Cayman Brac Cook-Off,** scheduled to take place in early June, features seafood, chicken, and dessert dishes. The public is invited to a barbecue and tasting sponsored by the Sister Islands Tourism Association and held at the Brac Reef Beach Resort. For more information, contact Steve Reily (☎ 345-948-1323, bracreef@candw.ky).

Pirates Week, in late October, is known for its swashbuckling fun, but the theme of Caymanian heritage is also emphasized during this festival. Reenactments of an old-time Caymanian wedding, thatch craft, and more have entertained and educated visitors at past festivals. Local foods, such as stewed conch, fish tea, and coconut rundown are served, and traditional quadrille dancing is highlighted. For more information, call ☎ 345-949-5078 or 5859, fax 345-949-5449, www.piratesweekfestival.com.

Two spring festivals also highlight heritage. In late April, the annual **Rotary Batabano Carnival** on Grand Cayman fills the island with carnival music including soca and calypso bands. Many Caymanian and Caribbean dishes tempt visitors. Travelers are welcome to bring their own costumes and partici-

pate in the parade, although only costumes designed and made in Cayman are eligible for judging. Contact Donna Myrie (☎ 345-945-5982) or Bonnie Anglin (☎ 345-914-2124).

Also in April, **Cayfest** is a national festival of the arts of the Cayman Islands. It includes theater, dance, painting, pottery, architecture, photography, and more. For more information, contact the **Cayman National Cultural Foundation** (☎ 345-949-5839).

Apart from the festivals, more and more travelers are seeking to find genuine Caymanian spirit in other ways. "We are seeing a trend toward people getting away from the heavily trafficked Seven Mile Beach to the other areas," notes Nikki McCoy, public relations manager for the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. "We've seen a growing interest to get away and get more of an island feel."

An easy afternoon excursion east of George Town is to **Pedro St. James National Historic Site**. Remembered as the "Birthplace of Democracy" on these islands, this site witnessed the first vote to create a legislature of representatives. This historic building has been renovated and is now open to the public. The site is at the center of a 7.65-acre landscaped park atop the 30-foot Great Pedro Bluff. Today, the three-story greathouse is home to a 49-seat multimedia theater and a café.

Pedro St. James is the most famous but far from the only historic site on Grand Cayman. **Silver Thatch Excursions** (☎ 345-945-6588, fax 345-949-3342, silvert@hotmail.com) offers guided tours of the island to introduce travelers to the real Cayman Islands. "Let's face it: Cayman has beautiful beaches, but there is more to a vacation (and life) than sitting on the beach. Besides, you can't honestly say you've seen an island if you've only been 'sitting on the

edge!' You've got to get out beyond the beach and see what we're really about! Picturesque villages and gardens, beautiful roadside scenery and historic treasures are hidden in side roads waiting to be discovered," according to Geddes Hislop.

For travelers interested in seeing the history of Grand Cayman, take the Silver Thatch Excursion called the **Eastern Experience** for a look at the Wreck of the Ten Sails Monument; Old Prospect, site of the first fort; and Bodden Town, for a walking tour to see early Caymanian architecture. A second historic tour starts with a walking tour of **West Bay**, including a stop at Old Homestead to learn more about early Cayman life. Travelers then head to George Town for a walking tour of the capital city and a visit to the site of Fort George and Elmslie Memorial Church, built by a shipwright, with a ceiling constructed to resemble a schooner's hull. The tour continues on to Old Prospect and the Old Savannah Schoolhouse.

Reservations are required for all tours and must be made 24 hours ahead; reservations can made by e-mail to silvert@hotmail.com. There is a minimum of two persons per tour; groups of four or more receive a 10% discount. Tours are commissionable to travel agents. Agents can hold 15% as a deposit and commission; clients can pay the balance in cash or travelers check directly to the tour. Along with guided tours, Geddes and his wife, Janet, also offer private tours at US $40 per hour.

Specialty Tours

For travelers looking to combine Caymanian culture with watersports, it's an easy order to fill with a little preplanning. "**Conching trips** are something more Caymanian and down home," explains Nikki McCoy. The crew and guests dive and snorkel for

pink queen conch, a shellfish that's then prepared as an appetizer, sliced and marinated in lime juice, onion and seasonings.

On Little Cayman, **McCoy's Dive Lodge** (☎ 345-948-0026, 800-626-0496, www.mccoyslodge.com.ky) will arrange conching trips with advance notice for a minimum of two persons. Trips can be planned any day and in any season; cost is US $25 per person.

On Grand Cayman, **Bayside Watersports** (☎ 345-949-1750) offers a full-day package from 9 am to 3 pm for US $62.50. The package includes free transport and use of snorkel gear. Guests dive for conch (a six- to eight-foot dive), snorkel at Stingray City and the Coral Gardens, then enjoy a fresh fish lunch at Kaibo Beach near Rum Point. This trip is not offered daily, so prior arrangements are necessary.

Weddings

Getting married in the islands is a simple affair. Non-residents need a special **marriage license** granted by the Governor and once that license is obtained there is no residency period. A marriage license costs CI $150, plus a stamp duty.

For a copy of the free brochure *Getting Married in the Cayman Islands*, couples should write to **Government Information Services**, Broadcasting House, Grand Cayman (☎ 345-949-8092, fax 345-949-5936).

Required Documents

- Original or certified **birth certificates** or **passports**.
- Cayman Islands international **embarkation cards**.

- Certified or original copies of **divorce decree** (if applicable).
- Certified or original **death certificate** (if applicable).
- **Marriage license** (see above)

Grand Cayman

Just what makes Grand Cayman grand? Grand Cayman is, as the name suggests, the largest of the three Cayman Islands. This is true not only in terms of size, but also in the number of attractions it offers. The 76-square-mile island, approximately 22 miles long and eight miles at its widest point, is chock-full of luxurious hotels and condominiums, beach bars, fine restaurants, duty-free shops, and plenty of soft adventure ranging from sunset cruises to scuba diving with stingrays.

This is the center of Cayman's tourism industry, the destination of most travelers. Within the island, most vacationers head to **Seven Mile Beach**, home to the lion's share of hotels and condominiums. This legendary beach is one of the best in the Caribbean.

Offshore Banking

One of the first things you'll notice about Grand Cayman is its affluence. Don't look for beach vendors or hair braiders along Seven Mile Beach – they're prohibited in this nation. The Cayman Islands enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the hemisphere, so expect to see nice cars, well-maintained streets, and signs of prosperity.

Grand Cayman is the fifth-largest financial center in the world, with over 500 banks, so currency exchange and ATMs are not a problem.

Much of that affluence comes from its successful tourism industry, 70% of its national product. Most visitors arrive from the States, although which part of the US varies by time of year. During the winter season, many come from the East and Midwest; in hot summer months a great number of Texans and Southerners make their way to these islands, which are cooler than their own home states during that time.

Offshore financial services play an integral role in the islands' success as well. Grand Cayman has over 500 licensed banks (including 47 of the 50 largest banks worldwide). Banking secrecy laws passed in 1966 laid the groundwork for this profitable industry that today ranks the small island as the fifth largest financial center in the world, surpassed only by London, Tokyo, New York, and Hong Kong.

Offshore insurance companies are also a growing business. Nearly 400 offshore insurance or captive insurance companies make their base here (captive insurance companies are set up by a company or a trade association to serve its members or employees). Thanks to Cayman Islands' generous tax-free status, many other companies choose to incorporate in the islands; currently almost 30,000 companies are registered here.

A Cayman Bank Account

Just what is a Cayman bank account? Some are, as might be expected, multi-million-dollar accounts, while others are much smaller in scale. Both take advantage of the tax-free status and confidentiality laws. These laws protect all reputable transactions as a means for earning tax-free interest. You can open an account once the Caymanian bank receives a reference from your home banker, then you can deposit funds (in US dollars, if you like). Unlike some countries, there is no exchange control and your money can be moved in and out of the country freely and privately.

Because of the banking and offshore insurance industries, you'll notice that Grand Cayman has a different atmosphere than many other Caribbean islands. Here you'll find many returning guests, folks who are required by corporate charter to meet

several times a year on the island (what a tough break!). You'll meet many Americans who own property on Grand Cayman and live part of the year on the sunny isle. You'll also see many people combining a business trip with a few days of R&R.

But don't think that this is a suit-and-tie island; Grand Cayman is as laid-back as any other fun-in-the-sun site.

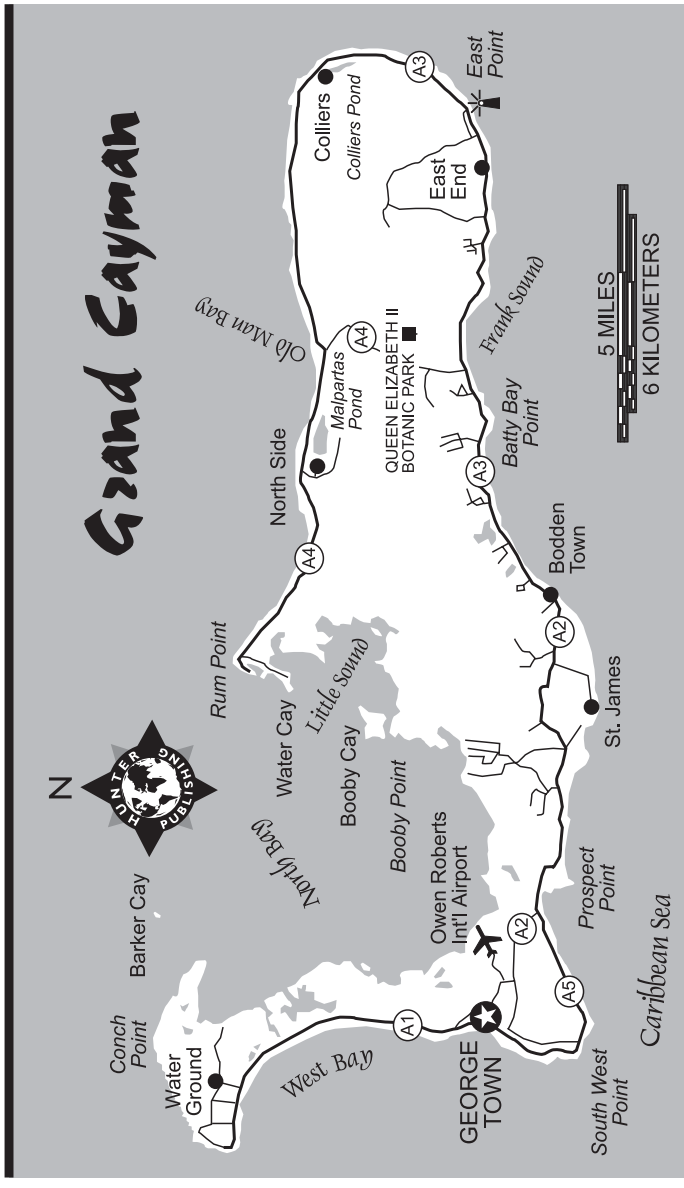
So where to start? If you arrive by air or cruise ship, you'll start off in George Town, the capital of the island and the center of its business, transportation and shopping industries. From George Town, most visitors head to Seven Mile Beach, the center of the tourism industry, filled with luxury hotels, condominiums, restaurants, dive operators, and more. For more on the layout of George Town, Seven Mile Beach, and other areas of the island, see the *Orientation* section (page 59).

Getting Here

By Air

Lucky travelers arrive on Grand Cayman by day, which affords them the perfect chance to see the varying colors of the waters that surround the small island, an indication of the shallows and depths that tempt scuba divers and snorkelers. From the air you'll also see the North Sound, home of Stingray City, and the white sands of Seven Mile Beach. Take a deep breath – you're almost there.

Located near George Town, **Owen Roberts International Airport** is a modern facility that has recently enlarged its baggage claim and immigration areas.


Grand Cayman
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
Barker Cay
Conch Point
Water Ground
West Bay
North Bay
Owen Roberts Int'l Airport
GEORGE TOWN
Booby Point
Booby Cay
Water Cay
Little Sound
Rum Point
Old Man Bay
North Side
Malpartas Pond
QUEEN ELIZABETH II BOTANIC PARK
Colliers
Colliers Pond
East End
East Point
Frank Sound
Batty Bay Point
Bodden Town
St. James
Prospect Point
South West Point
Caribbean Sea
A1
A2
A3
A4
A5
5 MILES
6 KILOMETERS

TIP

Despite improvements, we still suggest scooting off the plane as fast as you can because lines at Immigration do back up.

Once you're through immigration and customs, you'll find a tourist board office near baggage claim. Here you can load up on brochures and maps plus two-for-one coupons for some of the restaurants.

TIP

At the tourist desk be sure to pick up a copy of the free *Key* or *Destination Cayman* magazines for information on shopping, dining, and nightly entertainment. *What to Do Cayman* and *What's Hot! in Cayman* also offer information on places of interest to visitors. And in case you didn't fly in on Cayman Airways, you can pick up a copy of their magazine, *Horizons*.

Step outside the airport to meet your ride or get a taxi to your hotel. Many car rental agencies are across the street.

Finding Your Hotel

Travelers bound for Seven Mile Beach will find that they're just minutes from their hotel after arriving at the airport. And if you're staying on the East End of the island, you'll be in for a quiet, leisurely drive (the traffic dies out once you leave George Town) and

the chance to unwind a little before hitting the beach.

The hotels of Seven Mile Beach are a 10-minute drive from the airport. Taxi fare runs about US $4 per person, each way.

Getting Around

On Wheels

The low crime rate and excellent road system of the Cayman Islands encourage visitors to get out and explore. On each of the three Cayman Islands, attractions, beaches, small restaurants, and interesting sites are scattered, tempting vacationers to travel the countryside. Although taxi service is widespread on Grand Cayman, the easiest and most economical way for independent travelers to see the island is by rental car.

★ TIP

On Cayman (unlike some other Caribbean islands), we always rent a car. Why? Although rates aren't cheap, they are more economical than taxis if you will be exploring the island. With good roads, great weather, and safe conditions, there's no reason not to do some exploration. Don't limit yourself to one area of Grand Cayman; check out the entire island!

By Car

Car rentals begin at about US $30 per day for a compact car; expect to pay US $75-$85 per day for a Jeep. Prices are lowest in summer months, rising during peak winter demand. Along with the rental fee, drivers will need to purchase a temporary driver's license. Licenses can be obtained by presenting a valid driver's license to the rental agency and paying the US $7.50 fee. A major credit card or cash deposit is also required. Renters must be age 21 or over; some agencies require renters to be 25 years of age.

The selection varies with location, but the greatest choice of rental cars is found on Grand Cayman. Here, 4x4 vehicles are commonplace and many travelers enjoy driving around the island in the open-air vehicles. Air-conditioned sedans are also commonplace and often a better choice for families and those who want to secure their valuables while at the beach or in town. Most agencies feature American and Japanese models. Some offer unlimited mileage, free pick-up and drop-off, and free airport transfers.

Driving Tips

In true British tradition, traffic travels on the **left side** of the road. This can be confusing on your first day behind the wheel so start off a little slower than usual. Most cars are right-hand drive, so that will also necessitate a few adjustments (on our first excursion we turned on the windshield wipers every time we tried to give a turn signal!).

In George Town, keep an eye out for **one-way streets**, as well as pedestrians. Remember, many pedestrians, like you, are accustomed to cars being

on the right side of the road and may step out at the wrong time.

Watch for yellow lines in the road. These indicate **no parking** areas. Be sure to stop behind any bus; doors open out in the center of the road. Watch for speed limits and note that driving under the influence is a serious offense in the Cayman Islands.

The toughest driving is along Seven Mile Beach as it makes its way into George Town. This island has a real rush hour both mornings and evenings, so budget a little (make that a lot) of extra time during those peak periods. During the evening hours, drive especially carefully along this stretch as well. It is packed with pedestrians strolling from hotels to restaurants, as well as vacationers out and about in cars.

Rental Agencies

Many car rental agencies offer the seventh day free.

On Grand Cayman, rental agencies are found at the airport, just across the street from the terminal building. Many rental agencies are also located in George Town and adjacent to major hotels along Seven Mile Beach.

Airport Area

ANDY'S RENT A CAR
☎ 345-949-8111
www.andys.ky

BUDGET RENT A CAR
☎ 345-949-5605
budget@candw.ky

COCONUT CAR RENTALS
☎ 800-941-4562 or 345-949-7703
www.coconutcarrental.com, coconut@candw.ky

ECONOMY CAR RENTAL
Biggies Plaza, Airport Road
☎ 345-949-9550
www.economycarrental.com.ky, economy@candw.ky

HERTZ/ACE RENT-A-CAR
☎ 800-654-3131 or 345-949-2280
www.hertzcayman.com, acehertz@candw.ky

MARSHALL'S RENT A CAR
☎ 345-949-7821
mar_rac@candw.ky

JUST JEEPS
☎ 800-625-6174 or 345-945-1232
sotos4x4@candw.ky

THRIFTY CAR RENTAL
☎ 800-THRIFTY or 345-949-6640
thrifty@candw.ky

George Town

CAYMAN AUTO RENTALS
North Church Street
☎ 345-949-6954
cayauto@candw.ky

COCONUT CAR RENTALS
Crewe Road
☎ 800-941-4562 or 345-949-4377
www.coconutcarrentals.com, coconut@candw.ky

E. SCOTT RENT A CAR
Airport Centre
☎ 345-949-8867

SOTO'S 4X4 LTD.
Mary Street
☎ 800-625-6174 or 345-945-2424
www.sotos4x4.ky

Seven Mile Beach

ANDY'S RENT A CAR
(opposite the Marriott)
☎ 345-949-8111
www.andys.ky

AVIS CICO RENT A CAR
☎ 345-949-8468 (Hyatt Regency)
☎ 345-947-5585 (Westin Casuarina)
www.aviscayman.com, avisgcm@candw.ky

COCONUT CAR RENTALS
Coconut Plaza
☎ 800-941-4562 or 345-949-4377
www.coconutcarrentals.com

ECONOMY CAR RENTAL
The Falls, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-8992
www.economycarrental.com.ky, economy@candw.ky

HERTZ RENT-A-CAR
Marriott
☎ 345-949-8147

JUST JEEPS
North Church Street
☎ 800-625-6174 or 345-949-7263
justjeep@candw.ky

MARSHALL'S
201 Owen Roberts Drive
☎ 345-949-7821

SOTO'S 4X4 LTD.
(2 blocks north of Marriott)
☎ 345-945-2424
www.sotos4x4.ky

By Scooter

If you want to buzz around the island on a scooter, **Cayman Cycle** has rentals at Treasure Island Resort (☎ 345-949-8711), the Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman (☎ 345-949-1234, ext. 3050), and Coconut Plaza (☎ 345-945-4021). **Soto Scooters** (☎ 345945-4465) at Soto's Plaza on Coconut Plaza also offers rentals. Scooter rental averages $25 per day. A permit is required to drive a scooter, and riding experience is necessary.

By Bicycle

With its relatively flat grade, the Cayman Islands are a good destination for bicyclists. On Grand Cayman, however, note that along West Bay Road traffic can be extremely heavy during morning and evening rush hours. Prices vary, but average about $12 per day for a 10-speed bike and $14 for a mountain bike.

Check with **Cayman Cycle Rentals** at Treasure Island Resort (☎ 345-945-4021), Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman (☎ 345-949-1234, ext. 3050), and Coconut Plaza (☎ 345-945-4021); or **Soto Scooters and Car Rentals** (☎ 345-945-4652) at The Strand on West Bay Road.

By Taxi

We think taxis are a great way to get the general layout of the island. On our first visit to Grand Cayman, we hired a taxi for a half-day of touring. We were able to enjoy our look at the island without worrying about driving on the left side of the road; we also learned some insiders' tips that might have taken us years to pick up on our own.

Taxi rates are based on a maximum of three riders. The minimum fee is CI $4 for the first mile, CI $1.75

for each additional mile. Waiting time is charged at CI 75¢ per minute. Taxis can be found at most of the major hotels, down alongside the cruise terminal in George Town. They congregate beneath the shade trees, waiting for fares.

By Bus

Grand Cayman recently launched its first public transportation service, a response to the increasing traffic found along Seven Mile Beach. Today a new bus terminal on **Edward Street** (near the Public Library) in downtown George Town serves as the hub for 38 mini-buses. Fares range from CI $1.50 to CI $2.

Eight routes serve the island and include service to **West Bay** (the most frequent service, running every 15 minutes), **Bodden Town**, **East End** and **North Side** (once an hour). A bus also serves stops within **George Town**.

Look for blue license plates on these buses. For questions and schedules, ☎ 345-945-5100.

Exploring the Island

Guided Tours

Experienced tour operators offer an in-depth look at the islands. Guides can provide a general overview, as well as specialized tours focusing on eco-tourism, plants, history, birding, and shopping.

General island tours are offered by several companies. "Tours are personalized to give the visitor an opportunity to expand his or her knowledge of the Cayman Islands and its people," says Burton Ebanks, owner of AA Transportation Services on Grand Cayman. Overviews of the island range from

2½ hours to all day. Typical tours include a drive-through look at the capital city of George Town, a photo stop at the Conch Shell House (a private residence made of conch shells), a cruise along Seven Mile Beach, a tour of the Cayman Turtle Farm (the world's only such operation), and a visit to the community of Hell. Full-day tours include the same stops as a brief tour but also take a look at the less-visited east side of the island. Tours often drive through Bodden Town, visit the Pirate's Caves, stop for photos of the Blow Holes, and swing around to Rum Point, a popular watersports area overlooking the entrance to the North Sound.

"The attractions of the Cayman Islands are obvious and easy to find," points out Lisette Usborne, operations manager for Tropicana Tours Ltd. Nonetheless, guided tours still represent a valuable service even for those who might have a rental car during their stay. "Our tours encompass interesting details that the casual observer may not be privy to, fascinating facts and folklore about Cayman's colorful history."

An excellent operation on Grand Cayman is specially geared to travelers interested in eco-tourism. Geddes Hislop and his wife Janet are the founders of **Silver Thatch Excursions**, a company that focuses on the history and ecology of the island. Vacationers with an interest in botany can select from two excursions. Silver Thatch Excursions also offers specialized bird-watching trips, departing at 6 am on Saturdays, include stops at the Governor Michael Gore Bird Sanctuary, a haven for waterfowl, as well as Meagre Bay Pond, Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, and the Willie Ebanks Farm to view endangered West Indian whistling ducks. We can highly recommend this knowledgeable company if you have an interest in eco-tourism or history.

Tour Companies

Guided tours are an excellent way for first-time visitors to get a good overview. Guided tours are available from most taxi drivers for about US $37.50 for four persons per hour; you can also check with your hotel tour desk for possibilities. Here are several tour operators that offer varying packages:

A.A. CHAUFFEUR AND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES
☎ 345-949-7222
aatours@candw.ky

This company offers sightseeing tours, as well as airport pickup and chauffeuring.

BURTON'S TOURS
☎ 345-949-7222/2274, fax 345-947-6222

Burton Ebanks is a local resident with extensive knowledge of the entire region. He does both group and private tours and we can highly recommend him for his complete knowledge of Grand Cayman.

MAJESTIC TOURS
☎ 345-949-7773, fax 345-949-8647
www.majestic-tours.com
majtours@candw.ky

Majestic offers tours and airport transfers.

REIDS PREMIER TOURS
☎ 345-949-6531

Reid's has sightseeing tours, shopping trips, fishing and snorkel excursions, and more.

RUDY'S TRAVELLERS TRANSPORT, WEST BAY
☎ 345-949-3208, fax 345-949-1155

Rudy Powery, president of the Bird Club, leads guided birding tours, as well as sightseeing trips.

SILVER THATCH EXCURSIONS
☎ 345-945-6588, fax 345-949-3342

Cultural and natural history of the area. George Town tours include A Walk Back In History, a walking tour to the region's most historic sites. Birding and nature tours also available. Hotel pickup and return, drink, and a snack (sandwich and traditional Caymanian pastries) are included. The owners are true Caymanian experts and we highly recommend this tour company for anyone interested in learning more about the island's history and wildlife.

TROPICANA TOURS LTD.
☎ 345-949-0944, fax 345-949-4507
www.tropicana-tours.com
info@tropicana-tours.com

Tropicana offers sightseeing trips and watersports activities.

VERNON'S SIGHTSEEING TOURS
☎ 345-949-1509, fax 345-949-0213

Vernon's arranges sightseeing tours, hotel-to-dinner transportation, shopping excursions, fishing trips and more.

Orientation

Grand Cayman is an easy island to navigate and most travelers find that within a day or two they're ready to do a little exploring. Getting from A to B,

whether on foot, by taxi, or in your rental car, is easy.

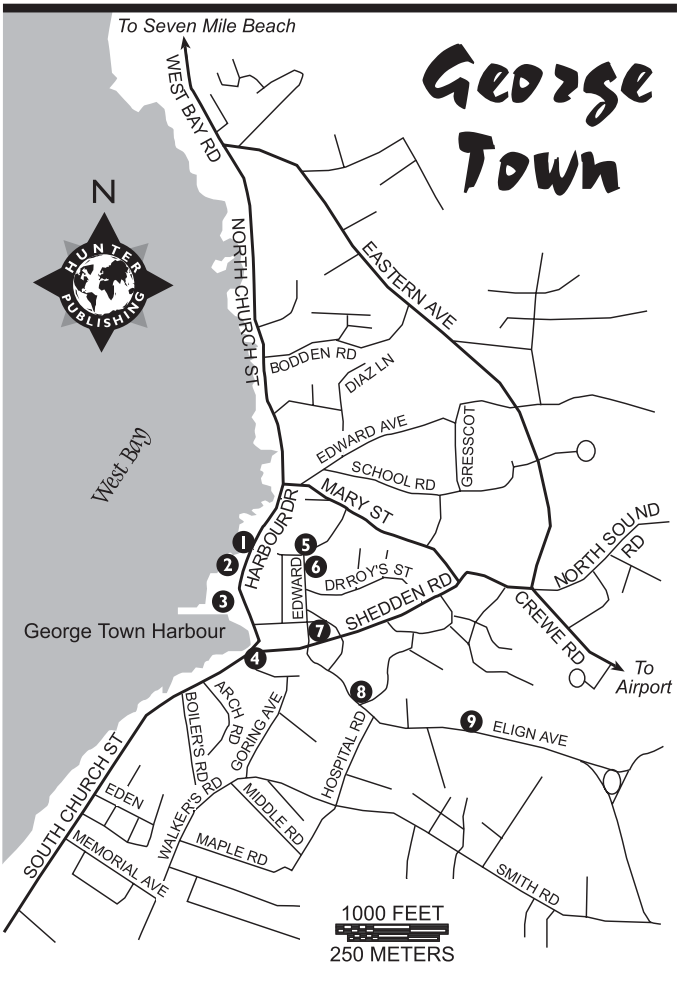
Good maps are available from the tourist board as well to help your discovery. The best way to get an overview on your first visit is an island tour (see above). Once you've got the lay of the land, you're ready for a more intense look at the people and places that make Grand Cayman such an international destination.

George Town

This is the hub of the island. To really know the island you've got to tear yourself away from the white sands of Seven Mile Beach (at least for a little while) and explore this community. As the capital of the Cayman Islands, it is home to over half of the 30,000 residents of Grand Cayman and the base for most of the business and government activity. Don't look for a bustling city, however; George Town is still very much an island community where you'll feel at home strolling the streets, eating at a seaside diner, and enjoying watersports just as you would in the resort areas of Seven Mile Beach.

George Town, on the island's southwest corner, faces west and overlooks **Hog Sty Bay** and the **George Town Harbour**, a busy port where on any given day you'll probably find cruise ships, as well as working vessels.

Much of the activity in George Town takes place along **North** and **South Church Streets**, which run north-south parallel to the shoreline. These roads face out to the harbor and are lined with duty-free shops, restaurants, and tourist-oriented businesses. The traffic light where South Church Street forks right onto **Shedden Road** or continues onto North Church Street (an intersection near the



1. Fort George
2. Seamen's Memorial
3. Customs
4. Museum
5. Town Hall
6. Clock Tower & Library
7. Post Office
8. Police
9. Dept. of Tourism

cruise terminal) is the heart of town. Just north of the cruise terminal, you'll see the intersection of **Harbour Drive** and **Cardinal Avenue**. Cardinal Avenue is the home of many duty-free shops.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

The intersection of Harbour Drive and Cardinal Avenue was featured in *The Firm*. Avery, Gene Hackman's character, makes a call from a phone booth as Tom Cruise looks out and sees an Abanks Dive Lodge advertisement.

Just south of the intersection with Cardinal Avenue lies the Shedden Road. Shedden Road heads east and soon becomes **Crewe Road**, which intersects with **Owen Roberts Drive**, the road to the airport. If you don't take the Owen Roberts Drive fork but veer right, you can stay on Crewe Road and head to the eastern part of the island.

East of the shoreline, government buildings and banking centers carry on the work of the Cayman Islands, helping the nation hold its spot as one of the major monetary centers of the world. Farther east is the airport, on the edge of **North Sound**, the shallow body of water that divides George Town, Seven Mile Beach, and the West End from the less developed East End of the island.

South of town, South Church Street winds its way through elegant residential districts, lined with beautiful seaside homes and a few quiet businesses.

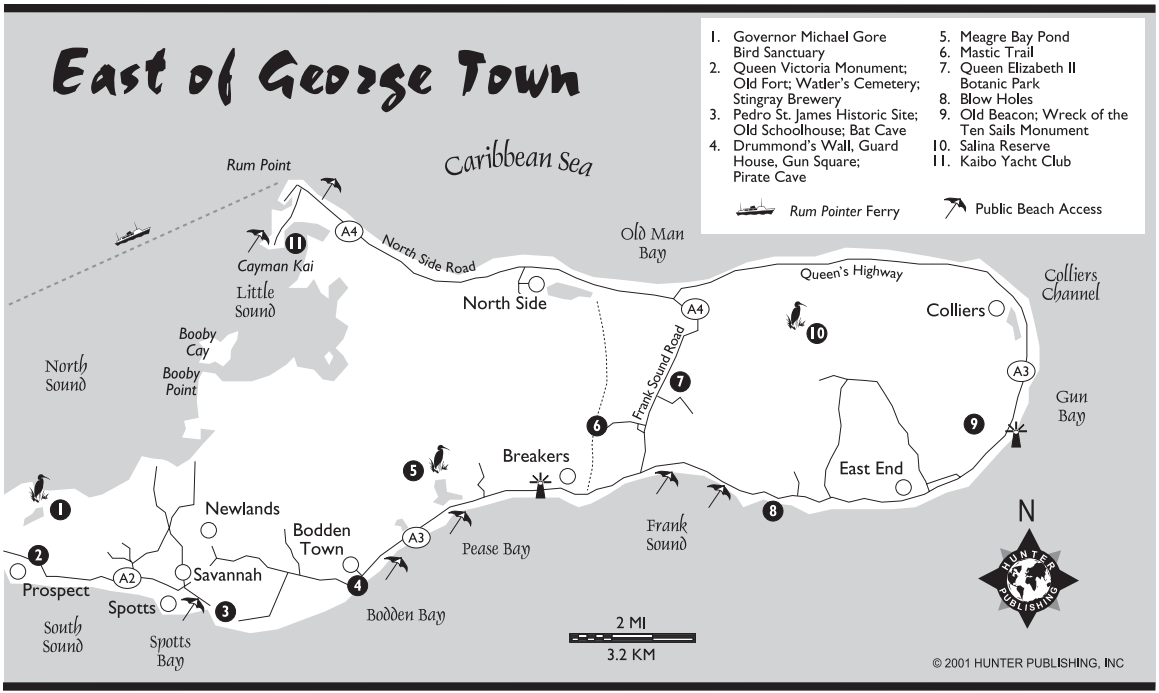
East End

East of George Town lies, predictably enough, the East End. One main road circles the entire East End, running east from George Town, tracing the shoreline as it snakes through small communities such as Bodden Town and Spotts. This road turns north at the end of the island and begins to trace the northern edge of the island, but you can take a shortcut halfway down the island on the **Frank Sound Road**, the route to the Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park. When it comes out on the north side, the road travels west to **Rum Point**, a popular destination with vacationers who arrive by ferry from Seven Mile Beach and enjoy a day of fun in the sun. South of Rum Point, **Cayman Kai** is a quiet residential area filled with beautiful, expensive homes. Rum Point and Cayman Kai look west across the vast, shallow North Sound.

Seven Mile Beach

Across the North Sound from Rum Point and Cayman Kai lies a long stretch of land that is the main destination for most Cayman Islands vacationers. This is Seven Mile Beach, which sprawls north of George Town, sandwiched between the sea and the North Sound. This narrow strip of land may be small but it's not short on accommodations and restaurants; this is the heart of vacationland. Here dive shops, watersports operators, beach bars, sportswear shops, and fine restaurants stand shoulder to shoulder, separated by some fine-needled casuarina trees. They look out on a calm, baby-blue sea that covers some of the top scuba diving sites in the world.

North to south along Seven Mile Beach runs **West Bay Road**, the main thoroughfare and one that can


East of George Town
1. Governor Michael Gore Bird Sanctuary
2. Queen Victoria Monument; Old Fort; Watler's Cemetery; Stingray Brewery
3. Pedro St. James Historic Site; Old Schoolhouse; Bat Cave
4. Drummond's Wall, Guard House, Gun Square; Pirate Cave
5. Meagre Bay Pond
6. Mastic Trail
7. Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park
8. Blow Holes
9. Old Beacon; Wreck of the Ten Sails Monument
10. Salina Reserve
11. Kaibo Yacht Club
Rum Pointer Ferry
Public Beach Access
Caribbean Sea
Rum Point
Cayman Kai
Little Sound
North Sound
Booby Cay
Booby Point
A4
North Side Road
North Side
Old Man Bay
Queen's Highway
Colliers
Colliers Channel
Frank Sound Road
A3
Gun Bay
East End
Breakers
Newlands
Bodden Town
Pease Bay
Frank Sound
Savannah
Prospect
Spotts
A2
South Sound
Spotts Bay
Bodden Bay
2 MI
3.2 KM
N
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sometimes get downright crowded. Along this road you'll find the lion's share of Cayman's tourism business.

Along Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman narrows to a skinny stretch about a mile wide, bordered by the beach on the west and North Sound to the east. On its eastern edges, the sea forms a rugged boundary, at some points etching into the land with salt creeks and harbors. The largest harbor along this stretch of North Sound is **Governors Harbour**, where Governors Creek offers a maze of natural and man-made canals. Today it's lined with luxury lots and lavish homes, as well as the **Cayman Islands Yacht Club**.

West Bay

Finally, Seven Mile Beach ends in West Bay, the clump of land on the westernmost side of North Sound. This area is the home of the **Cayman Turtle Farm**, one of the most popular attractions with cruise tour operators and a great spot for families.

Traveling north from Seven Mile Beach along West Bay Road, the name of the road changes to **North West Point Road** and follows the coastline, becoming more and more residential. At the Cayman Turtle Farm, a less traveled road traces the far northern edge of this region, continually switching names along the route: **Boatswains Bay Road**, **King Road**, **Birch Tree Hill Road**, **Conch Point Road**, **Palmetto Point Road**. Traveling west, houses become fewer and fewer and the area gives way to a swampy habitat.

WATTLE & DAUB HOUSES

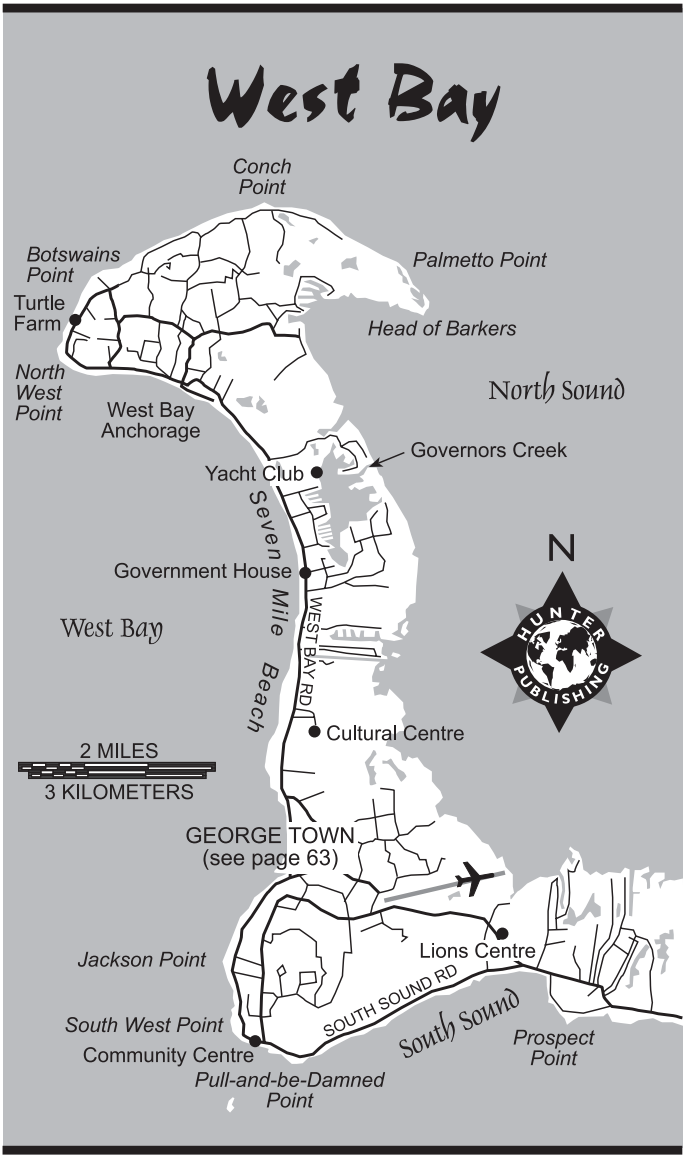
West Bay is home to many traditional Caymanian houses built of wattle and daub. The technique used ironwood posts to support walls woven with cabbagewood. The wood was then plastered over with daub, a mortar that includes burned coral. Making the daub was often a neighborhood activity since it was so labor-intensive. This style was sturdy and could withstand the hurricanes and tropical storms as well as rain and sun. The technique is no longer used.

Or you can turn away from the coast and head to the inland area of West Bay and to a community called **Hell**, a popular stop on island tours. Follow Hell Road East onto **Reverend Blackman Road** and then **Batabano Road** to North Sound and the fishing community of Batabano. This is the home of **Morgans Harbour**, starting point for many deep-sea fishing cruises and some tours of Stingray City. It's not as glitzy as Seven Mile Beach, but offers an interesting look at the working side of Grand Cayman.

Best Places To Stay

The Cayman Islands offers over 2,300 hotel rooms and more than 2,100 condominium and villa units, most found on Grand Cayman. While some of these cater to a dive crowd seeking low-cost, no-frills accommodations, most properties on Grand Cayman are for a medium to upscale market.

Room prices vary greatly with type of accommodation, location, and time of year. High season (mid-


West Bay
Conch Point
Botswains Point
Palmetto Point
Turtle Farm
Head of Barkers
North West Point
North Sound
West Bay Anchorage
Governors Creek
Yacht Club
Seven Mile Beach
Government House
West Bay
WEST BAY RD
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
Cultural Centre
2 MILES
3 KILOMETERS
GEORGE TOWN
(see page 63)
Jackson Point
Lions Centre
SOUTH SOUND RD
South West Point
South Sound
Prospect Point
Community Centre
Pull-and-be-Damned Point

December through mid-April) brings prices about 40% higher than in summer months. Most accommodations are found along Seven Mile Beach. These are divided into properties on the west side, or beach side of the road and those on the east, which don't have direct access to the beach.

ACCOMMODATIONS PRICE SCALE	
Price scale is based on a standard room for two persons, per night.	
Inexpensive	under $100
Moderate	$100-$200
Expensive	$201-$300
Deluxe	over $300

Resorts & Hotels

Seven Mile Beach

BEACH CLUB COLONY
West Bay Road
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-949-8100, fax 345-945-5167
Reservations: ☎ 800-482-DIVE
Moderate to deluxe

As its name suggests, this all-inclusive resort is tucked right on the beachfront. It offers 41 guest rooms. All come with telephones, air conditioning and TV. There are laundry facilities, a pool, restaurant and bar, dive shop, snorkeling, sailing, windsurfing, fishing, tennis, and more.

CARIBBEAN CLUB
Seven Mile Beach
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-945-4099, fax 345-945-4443
Reservations: ☎ 800-327-8777
www.caribclub.com
Expensive

The Caribbean Club offers 18 one- and two-bedroom pastel pink villas and the opportunity for relaxation. Six of the villas are situated on the beachfront; others have a garden view. All rooms include a full kitchen, air conditioning, ceiling fan, TV, phone, dining room, and furnished patio.

GRAND CAYMAN MARRIOTT BEACH RESORT
Seven Mile Beach
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-949-0088, fax 345-949-9290
Reservations: ☎ 800-223-6388
www.marriotthotels.com/gcmgc
Expensive

We love this property and have enjoyed visiting here many times, dating back to its days as a Radisson. A few years ago, the property underwent an extensive renovation and it's better than ever. Located two miles from George Town and about four miles from the airport, this convenient resort is set on a beautiful stretch of Seven Mile Beach. Swimmers and snorkelers can enjoy calm waters and a small coral reef just offshore or learn scuba diving. Dive trips can be booked through the on-site shop.

One point to notice about the Marriott is its shallow beach. Previous storms have robbed this stretch of the beach of much of its sand; although restorations have been ongoing, at press time the beach was still shallower than that found at many other locations along Seven Mile Beach. Nonetheless, guests find

there is plenty of room for sunning or resting under tall casuarina trees.

The Marriott is known for its guest rooms, the largest on the island. All have been recently renovated; 80% of the rooms feature king-sized beds. Oceanfront rooms include private balconies with good beach views and are worth the somewhat long walk to the elevators in this 315-room hotel. Facilities include casual and fine dining, pool and hot tub, dive shop, wave runners, windsurfing, shopping arcade, and full-service spa.

HOLIDAY INN GRAND CAYMAN
West Bay Road across from the Public Beach
Reservations: ☎ 800-HOLIDAY
☎ 345-946-4433, fax 345-946-4434
www.holidayinn.com
Moderate

We've got fond memories of the old Holiday Inn: the huge tree and the funky beach bar, the Barefoot Man, the fun, family-oriented atmosphere. Alas, that hotel is no more, torn down to make way for an upcoming Ritz-Carlton. Fortunately, however, the Holiday Inn has been rebuilt and is now one of the newest hotels on Seven Mile Beach. Not as atmospheric as its old self, this hotel is across the street from the beach but still offers good bargains for families. The hotel is north of much of the traffic along Seven Mile Beach but you will need to cross the street to reach the sand. Rooms are standard Holiday Inn fare, with mini-bar, iron and ironing board, satellite TV, coffee maker, and hair dryer.

Recently the Holiday Inn instituted an all-inclusive pricing policy. The package includes all meals and beverages except for premium liquors; it also includes non-motorized watersports activities.

HYATT REGENCY GRAND CAYMAN
Seven Mile Beach
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-949-1234, fax 345-949-8528
Reservations: ☎ 800-233-1234
www.hyatt.com or www.grandcayman.hyatt.com
Expensive to Deluxe

If you're looking for either a beach resort with a full range of amenities or a business hotel with plenty of free time options, this place fits the bill. This longtime favorite underwent an expansion a few years ago to offer rooms directly on Seven Mile Beach and to increase its watersports and recreational facilities.

The Hyatt has the atmosphere of a country club with the amenities of an island resort. The grounds are dotted with royal palms and ponds are filled with colorful koi. There's a freeform swimming pool, complete with bridges and pool bar. Blocks of guest rooms circle this central area; the hotel's Britannia Villas (see page 88) lie beyond, adjacent to the golf course. Shuttle service is available from the main house to the villas and spa.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

The Aquas Pool Bar in the original section of the resort was featured in *The Firm*. Remember when Jeanne Tripplehorn's character shows up on the island to surprise Avery (Gene Hackman)? She meets him here.

Families make up a growing portion of the hotel's business, thanks to the **Camp Hyatt** program, which features villa accommodations with kitchen facilities and the many recreational options. Golfers

appreciate the Britannia golf course. Many guest rooms overlook the course, designed by Jack Nicklaus, or the private marina. Standard rooms, each carpeted and featuring a soft Caribbean color scheme, include a mini-bar, satellite color television, coffee makers with complimentary coffee, electronic key card system, direct dial telephones with voice mail, in-room safe, ironing board, and hair dryer. Along with standard rooms, the property includes 50 one- , two- , three- , and four-bedroom villas and 10 bi-level suites. The **Britannia Villas** are especially popular with families and include all the hotel amenities except turndown service. A separate Regency Club offers 44 rooms that include complimentary continental breakfast, evening cocktails and hors d'oeuvres, concierge service, upgraded amenities and linens, and use of the Regency Club lounge.

During our last visit to the Hyatt we stayed at the beachfront addition. Several years ago, a $15 million expansion added 53 beachfront suites on Seven Mile Beach. These suites have a separate living room that includes a dining area, wet bar, work station with two phone lines, and upgraded amenities. All suites have sea views, and these rooms are served by a dedicated concierge. The complex is highlighted by a landscaped pool complex with bronze sea turtle sculptures, waterfalls, and three freshwater pools with mosaic tile designs of stingrays and other marine life.

Red Sail Sports has opened a 2,000-square-foot state-of-the-art diving center as part of the beach addition. The center serves as Red Sail's main on-island training facility with dedicated classroom space, an on-site eight-foot training pool and locker room, as well as a retail shop that includes photo/video editing and developing facilities. Red Sail offers a range of watersports, including catamaran

cruises on two 65-foot vessels for dinner sails, cocktail cruises, and luncheon snorkel excursions to Stingray City. Dive boats run one- and two-tank trips, as well as night dives. Sea kayaking, WaveRunners, waterskiing, parasailing, and underwater photography are also available, as well as deep-sea, bone, and reef fishing. The Hyatt also operates a ferry to Rum Point, on the northern point of the East End (see page 160).

For an additional fee, children aged three to 12 can take part in the **Camp Hyatt Grand Cayman** program, available daily during the summer months, Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas holidays and weekends year-round. Activities range from nature walks where you can spot the island's blue iguanas and parrots to turtle farm visits or shell painting. The 1,800-square-foot Caymanian-style Camp Hyatt House includes a playground, interactive computer games, and a big-screen TV for movie viewing. Some activities are free, for others there is an additional charge. The resort also offers cribs and babysitting services.

INDIES SUITES
Seven Mile Beach
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-945-5025, fax 345-945-5024
Reservations: ☎ 800-654-3130
Moderate to expensive

Although it doesn't have a beachfront location, Indies Suites is a good choice if you're looking for suite accommodations. All rooms include either a king-size or two double beds and a full-size kitchen equipped for four. Rooms also include satellite TV, telephone, storage locker for dive gear, and convertible sofa bed. The family-operated all-suites hotel includes a dive shop and a free resort course introduction to

scuba diving. There's also a pool, hot tub, cabana bar, boutique, mini-mart, and complimentary continental breakfast daily.

RITZ-CARLTON GRAND CAYMAN

West Bay Road
Reservations: ☎ 800-241-3333
www.ritzcarlton.com
Expensive

At press time, this property was still under construction and scheduled to open in September 2004. There's great excitement over this new hotel on the site of the former Holiday Inn. The property will be composed of a 366-room resort and a 71-room condominium facility and will feature a nine-hole Greg Norman-designed private golf course and a full-service spa.

SLEEP INN

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-9111, fax 345-949-6699
Reservations: ☎ 800-SLEEP INN
Inexpensive

If you're in search of a centrally located place to lay your head after a day of fun in the sun, the Sleep Inn is a good choice. This chain motel is just outside of George Town along the Seven Mile Beach stretch (the hotel itself is not on the beach). Rooms include air conditioning and telephones. The property has a pool and whirlpool, poolside bar and grill, dive shop, and watersports center.

GRAND CAYMAN SUNSHINE SUITES RESORT BY WYNDHAM
1112 West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-3000, fax 345-949-1200
Reservations: ☎ 877-786-1110 or 800-WYNDHAM
www.sunshinesuites.com
Moderate

For travelers with an eye on the budget, Grand Cayman's Sunshine Suites Resort, which recently became part of the Wyndham family, provides hotel accommodations in the heart of Seven Mile Beach without the high price of beachfront hotels and condos. Across the street from the beach and adjacent to **The Links at SafeHaven** golf course, this all-suites hotel has a lot to offer cost-conscious travelers. This resort combines the atmosphere of a resort with the pricing of a motel. The hotel has few recreational features of its own but is surrounded by attractions within walking distance including golf and Seven Mile Beach. Sporting a Caribbean look with lemon-colored guest room blocks built around a central pool, the hotel has a casual and relaxed atmosphere. Sunshine Suites Resort is often quiet during the day as guests explore the island, enjoy the beach, or play a round of golf.

The hotel has 130 suites in three categories. For two persons, 38 studio suites offer one queen bed. Twenty-nine deluxe suites, for up to four guests, have two queen beds. The hotel also has 60 one-bedroom suites, each with a separate bedroom and a king-sized bed; the living room contains a queen-sized sofa sleeper. Rooms are decorated in bright Caribbean colors, and white tile floors lend a sunny look to the large suites. All include fully equipped kitchens with a coffee maker, complimentary coffee and tea, stovetop, all cooking and eating utensils, and a microwave. All rooms also include 34-channel cable TV, individually controlled air conditioning,

ceiling fans, and baths with aromatherapy products. Especially popular with families; children under age 12 stay free in parent's room with existing bedding. Cribs are also available.

Business travelers find several work-friendly features in the rooms, including dual dataports, a well-lit workspace, and private voice mail. The hotel includes a business center with photocopy, computer, and fax facilities. Other facilities include a guest laundry with coin-operated washers and dryers, safety deposit boxes, irons/ironing boards, and hair dryers.

Guests will find that a limited housekeeping plan is available. The plan includes full housekeeping service at the mid-point of a guest stay of four nights or more. Guests who stay seven nights or more receive full housekeeping service every three or four days. Towels and linens can be exchanged at any time.

On-site recreation includes a freshwater swimming pool with locked storage area for scuba gear; rinse tanks are available for washing wetsuits and equipment. The closest recreational facility is The Links at SafeHaven, adjacent to the hotel. Guests at Sunshine Suites have membership privileges here, and are offered a discounted rate at the 18-hole golf course.

The hotel is not on the beach; you must cross West Bay Road using a public beach access path directly across from the property. Beach towels and chairs are available at the front desk. Guests looking for more than a beach workout have complimentary unlimited access to the **World Gym** at the Harquail Bypass, about a 20-minute walk from the property. Also, hotel guests are offered a 15% discount at **Spa Espirit**, near Sunshine Suites in the adjacent The Falls Plaza; spa facilities at Spa Espirit include hair, skin, and body treatments. Discount rates for guests

are also offered at **Economy Car Rentals**, **Capt. Marvin's Snorkeling and Fishing**, and **Fisheye Dive**.

Sunshine Suites Resort does not have an on-site restaurant. **Eats Café** and **Legendz Bar** are in The Falls Plaza about 40 yards from the property. Guests can charge breakfast, lunch, and dinner to their rooms at these restaurants. In the evenings, Legendz offers live entertainment or televised sporting events on big screens. Guests receive a 10% discount on meals at The Links Restaurant; this is at the golf clubhouse overlooking the course. If you would like to prepare your own meals, **Foster's Supermarket** is in The Strand Plaza, about a 10-minute walk from the hotel. Along with kitchen facilities for preparing meals in rooms, the hotel now offers two outdoor picnic areas with a gas barbecue grill.

WESTIN CASUARINA RESORT AND SPA

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-3800, fax 345-949-5825
Reservations: ☎ 800-WESTIN-1
www.westin.com or www.westincasuarina.com
Deluxe

We first visited this property when construction was still underway and every time we return we are reminded how much we love the finished product. Built on a strip of beach bordered by willowy casuarina trees, the hotel offers 340 guest rooms, most with breathtaking views of the sea from step-out balconies. It has the feel of a conference property, with a slightly dress-up atmosphere in the main lobby. Facilities include beachfront, casual and fine dining restaurants, pools, whirlpools, fitness facilities, beauty salons, and a new spa.

This is also home to the **Westin Kids Club**. Upon check-in, children receive a Kids Club sports bottle

that can be filled with complimentary beverages at mealtimes. Young visitors also receive coloring books and bath toys; special amenities are available for infants. Parents receive safety kits with adhesive bandages, electrical outlet covers, identification bracelets, and a list of local emergency phone numbers. Jogging strollers are available upon request at no additional cost. Whenever possible, guest rooms are set up in advance with high chairs, cribs and other items as appropriate.

George Town

SUNSET HOUSE RESORT
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-7111, fax 345-949-7101
Reservations: ☎ 800-854-4767
www.sunsethouse.com
Moderate

Just south of George Town, Sunset House is a favorite with divers. Just offshore lie both the reef and several shipwrecks, making this a virtual playground for those interested in underwater adventure.

There's nothing fancy about Sunset House – it's designed for those whose major portion of time is spent in the water, not necessarily on land. Guest rooms include standard accommodations overlooking the courtyard and deluxe rooms with ocean or garden views. Two suites are also available.

Divers and those who want to learn can utilize the full-service dive operation, which offers resort courses, certification courses, check-out dives, and advanced instruction. When you're suited up and ready to go, it's just a matter of stepping off the shore ladder and into the aqua-playground. For more distant dives, six custom boats take underwater enthusiasts

on two-tank dives around the island, while *Manta*, a catamaran, takes experienced divers on all-day, three-tank dives. Facilities at this 59-room resort include a restaurant featuring local and continental cuisine, gift shop, oceanfront bar, freshwater swimming pool and hot tub, full-service dive shop, six dive boats, and the Cathy Church Underwater Photo Centre, which offers half-day to full-week courses (see page 137).

East End

MORRITT'S TORTUGA CLUB AND RESORT
East End
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-947-7449, fax 345-947-7669
Reservations: ☎ 800-447-0309
Moderate

A favorite with divers and windsurfers, this 179-room East End resort is right on the beach. Here you'll be far from the hustle and bustle of Seven Mile Beach and George Town; most visitors rent a car because of the distance. Amenities include air conditioning, ceiling fans, phones, TV, kitchenettes, pool, Jacuzzi, restaurant, bar, dive shop, scuba trips, snorkeling, sailing, windsurfing, fishing, and more.

NORTH SIDE SURF INN
North Side
☎ 345-947-1431, fax 345-947-0704
Inexpensive

About halfway between Rum Point and the intersection of Frank Sound Road on the North Side, this small inn offers 10 guest rooms right on the beach. All rooms have air conditioning; dive packages are also available. One special attraction of this small inn is its restaurant, Red Ginger; its cuisine brings

many visitors, locals and travelers alike, out from George Town and Seven Mile Beach.

THE REEF RESORT

Colliers Bay in East End
☎ 345-947-0100, fax 345-947-7600
Reservations: ☎ 888-232-0541
www.thereef.com.ky
Expensive

Formerly the Royal Reef, this luxurious timeshare property is on Colliers Bay. Located next to Morritt's, the resort is on a beautiful stretch of beach. The benefit of staying here is that you are far from the hustle and bustle of Seven Mile Beach; the disadvantage is that, well, you are far from the hustle and bustle of Seven Mile Beach. You will have quite a drive if you want to do a little nightlife or sample many of Cayman's restaurants.

Each of the rooms has all the features you'll need for a home-away-from-home, including a completely furnished kitchen, dining room, living room, and more. Some of the units have beach views.

TURTLE NEST INN

Main Road (A3)
Bodden Town
☎ 345-947-8665, fax 345-947-6379
www.turtlenestinn.com
Moderate

We stopped here on our last trip to Grand Cayman and enjoyed its homey feel. It has a bed-and-breakfast atmosphere and gives visitors a real home-away-from-home sensation, just a short drive from George Town in Bodden Town. The inn is on the main street, but behind the hotel lies a beautiful beach with plenty of tranquility. The Spanish-style hotel is two-story with cool tile floors, bright Carib-

bean color bedspreads and rattan couches. Guest accommodations are one-bedroom apartments, each with fully equipped kitchens. Each room has both a queen-sized bed and a double pull-out couch as well as TV, VCR, digital phone, ceiling fans, and central air conditioning. Amenities include a gas barbecue on the beach for guest use, a laundry room, freshwater pool, and twice-weekly restaurant.

West Bay

SPANISH BAY REEF
West Bay
☎ 345-949-3765, fax 345-949-1842
Reservations: ☎ 800-482-DIVE
Expensive

On the far northwest end of West Bay, Spanish Bay Reef is a good all-inclusive choice. Tucked on a sandy stretch of beach shaded by tall palms and willowy casuarina trees, the resort is casual and fun. The sea here is somewhat choppy, although a barrier creates a swimming area. This resort is a favorite with divers. Dive sites include No Name Wall, Chinese Wall, Lemon Drop-Off, Grand Canyon, The Pinnacles, and more, each offering divers a peek at an undersea world filled with marine life, fascinating formations, and beautiful corals. All rooms offer air conditioning, private balcony or patio and satellite TV. Amenities include **The Spanish Main Restaurant** and **Calico Jack's Poolside Bar**, as well as a private beach, freshwater pool, Jacuzzi, and dock.

Included in the price are meals and beverages (well drinks only, no wine or champagne), use of sightseeing cars on a shared basis, bicycle, introductory scuba and snorkeling lessons, unlimited scuba diving from shore for certified divers (including tanks

and weight belt), boat dive (usually a two-tank dive), airport transfers, and all taxes and gratuities.

Condominiums & Villas

When it comes to condominiums and villas, there's one word to describe the current state of business: booming. New projects are dotting the islands. Travelers can now choose from a great number of condominiums, villas, and guest houses, whether they're headed to the islands for diving, honeymooning, or just some R&R.

For those in search of a little elbow room, the villas of the Cayman Islands just might fit the bill. Along with traditional hotels, the island offers families, or anyone looking for more space, a large inventory of villas. These range from spacious condominium units to timeshares or private houses.

Amenities at condominiums vary with price. You can expect a microwave, dishwasher, washer/dryer, cable TV, and central air at most properties. Others will include private swimming pools, hot tubs, and more. A few properties offer honeymoon, golf, dive, and escape packages. In the last few years, there has been a real trend toward super-luxurious condominiums on this island. "More and more private houses and exclusive (super deluxe) condos are being built," notes Penny Cumber, managing director for **Cayman Villas** (see below for contact information). "Both houses and condos are becoming more deluxe, and many have a private pool, some with Jacuzzi and gym."

Villas and condominiums appeal to many types of vacationers. Penny Cumber says that the properties are especially favored by "honeymooners, who opt for the quiet private houses and condos; families with young children (houses/condos all one level and

ground floor); families with older children (houses within walking distance of watersports); family reunions or a large gathering of friends (seeking condos/houses close by); wedding parties with guests in nearby villas; and couples celebrating special occasions."

Properties are closely inspected and monitored to maintain high standards. "All our villas (houses and condos) are inspected by ourselves, as well as the Department of Tourism, and departments of fire and environment. They inspect furnishings, linens, flooring, woodwork, metal fixtures, landscaping, beach, quality of drinkable water, and check for fire extinguishers and detectors, etc. They (and we) are very tough! All villas are professionally sprayed by pest control specialists. All are in excellent shape and good quality," says Cumber.

Cumber, whose company represents over 50 private homes, as well as many condominiums, says "A significant change is the number of deluxe villas now available. More and more private houses and exclusive, very deluxe condos are being built. Many have their own pools and staff and are well equipped with central air, cable TV/ VCR, and all amenities such as washer/dryer, dishwasher, and microwave."

CAYMAN VILLAS

☎ 345-945-4144, fax 345-949-7471
Reservations: ☎ 800-235-5888
www.caymanvillas.com

Cayman Villas manages numerous properties on Grand Cayman and on the Sister Islands.

Aside from its most luxurious properties, Cayman Villas also offers properties for the average traveler. Over 100 properties, some starting at $99 a night, are represented. "Cayman Villas specializes in beachfront condos and private houses ranging from

economy to deluxe, from studios to seven-bedroom properties. Most condos are on Seven Mile Beach. Most private houses are at Cayman Kai, but there are many other quiet beaches around Grand Cayman, Cayman Brac and Little Cayman, on which we also have villas. Guests can be on their own private beach and in the midst of all the action."

Cayman Villas' offerings include **The Great House** on Seven Mile Beach (see page 91). This third-floor apartment was used by *The Firm* filmmakers.

Cayman Villas also offers **The Green House**, another luxury villa away from the hustle and bustle of Seven Mile Beach. (see below),

Travel agents can book Cayman Villas properties up to 13 months in advance. "We hold 13 months on the calendar and the owner tells us when he wants his villa. If you call some condominiums, they don't know if the owner might want the property so they can't book far in advance. If we do have to move a client for some reason like the sale of a house, our policy is to upgrade the guest to a nicer property at no charge."

Here's a sampling of some of the many properties available through Cayman Villas:

THE GREEN HOUSE
Spotts Beach
Deluxe

This private home is on the beachfront about five minutes from the airport in George Town. The house includes four oceanview bedrooms (two are masters, each with king bed), four full en suite bathrooms and a half guest bath, living and dining room with high ceilings, French doors to let in ocean breezes, kitchen with microwave, waste disposal, ice-maker, and dishwasher, utility room, satellite TV, VCR, fresh-

water pool, and housekeeping services. Luxury comes at a hefty price for this property as well.

KAI SOUND
Cayman Kai
Moderate

This is a studio cottage on the beach at Cayman Kai. It has a kitchenette with microwave, washer/dryer, air conditioning and use of two bicycles.

GEMENI
Cayman Kai
Expensive

This duplex has two one-bedroom, one-bath cottages. They include a living room, full kitchen and screened porch; you can step right onto the beach. Amenities include air conditioning, telephone, TV and VCR, washer/dryer, icemaker and more.

HARBOUR VIEW
George Town
Inexpensive to moderate

This one-bedroom, one-bath apartment is within walking distance of George Town. It offers a living/dining room, full kitchen, and a patio with ocean view. There's daily maid service, TV, telephone and air conditioning.

Seven Mile Beach

THE ANCHORAGE
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4088, fax 345-945-5001
www.theanchoragecayman.com
Expensive

This group of 15 villas has two bedrooms per unit, and is considered one of the island's most luxurious

properties. Guests can kick back and relax in style here. Rooms are elegant yet guests feel comfortable coming right in off Seven Mile Beach, sandy feet and all. The rooms include a private screened balcony, perfect for watching the sunset or for enjoying a quiet breakfast. The units include TVs, VCRs, kitchen, laundry facilities, daily maid service, barbecue grills, pool, a dive shop, and tennis.

AQUA BAY CLUB

☎ 345-945-4728, fax 345-945-5681
Reservations: ☎ 800-825-8703
www.aquabayclub.com
Deluxe

This 21-unit condominium resort on Seven Mile Beach underwent an extensive renovation a few years ago. Honeymooners, divers, golfers, families and couples are target markets for this property with one- and two-bedroom oceanfront units. Each unit has a view of the sea and all are fully equipped. Guest facilities include a freshwater pool, tennis, and Jacuzzi. Unlike most condominium properties on Grand Cayman, Aqua Bay Club (formerly Grand Bay Club) offers guests the option of packages. "At present it is the only property offering honeymoon, golf, dive and escape packages. Future plans include a dine-around package and an air-inclusive package," notes Walter Puk, Aqua Bay Club's director of marketing.

THE AVALON CONDOMINIUMS

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4171, fax 345-945-4189
www.cayman.org/avalon
Deluxe

A 27-unit complex offering three-bedroom condos sleeping four to six guests. Just four miles from

George Town, this deluxe property includes TVs, VCRs, kitchen and laundry facilities, maid service, handicapped-accessible rooms, barbecue grills, and more. Guests have use of a pool and hot tub, both just steps off Seven Mile Beach, as well as a fitness center if you don't feel like a beach jog. And for your rental car, there are even private garages, perfect for keeping the car cool.

The guest facilities are bright and cheery, with plenty of white tile, tropical pastels, and light-toned woods. Units are spread across three floors but there's no concern about hoisting groceries and luggage to the upper units; there are elevators for the top two floors. All the rooms have screened lanais, perfect for sitting with an evening drink and watching the sunset.

BEACHCOMBER CONDOMINIUMS

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4470, fax 345-945-5019
www.beachcomber1.com
Deluxe

This property on Seven Mile Beach has 24 guest units tucked beneath willowy casuarina trees. The complex includes several size units: two bedroom/two bath with a screen patio and ocean or pool views, two bedroom/two bath with a den and a screened patio, or oceanfront two bedroom/two bath with a den and screened porch. All condos include air conditioning, telephone, TV, VCR, kitchen, laundry service, maid service, and use of pool. There's also great snorkeling right off the beach here or guests can relax under the shade of a palm palapa.

BRITANNIA VILLAS

Seven Mile Beach
West Bay Road at the Hyatt Regency
☎ 345-949-1234, fax 345-949-8032
Reservations: ☎ 800-223-1234
www.britanniavillas.com
Deluxe

If you'd like to stay in a condominium but want the services of a hotel, the Britannia Villas might just be for you. These elegant accommodations lie beyond the Hyatt Regency guest rooms, adjacent to the Britannia golf course (across the road from the beach but connected with a covered walkway above the traffic). Guests at the Britannia Villas have the use of all the hotel amenities, including pools, restaurants, beach bar, spa, fitness center, children's club, diving, tennis and more.

Along with standard rooms, there are 50 villas with up to four bedrooms, and 10 bi-level suites. "They're an economical choice for families, mostly because they are spacious and combine the cost of two rooms into one accommodation," explains William M. Conolly, vice president of sales and marketing. "Families do not have to eat out all the time but have the option of preparing meals or snacks at their desire." Conolly also recommends the villas to reunion groups, business travelers, divers, and honeymooners.

CARIBBEAN CLUB

Seven Mile Beach
West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-4099, fax 345-945-4443
www.caribclub.com
Moderate

Eighteen pastel pink one- and two-bedroom villas offer seaside relaxation just steps from the water's

edge. Six of the villas are beachfront; others have a garden view. All rooms have a full kitchen, air conditioning, ceiling fan, TV, phone, dining room, and furnished patio. Facilities here include tennis. When you get hungry, head to **Lantana's**, one of the island's top restaurants.

CRESCENT POINT RESORT
Seven Mile Beach
West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-2243, fax 345-945-2263
Reservations: ☎ 800-486-9428
www.crescentpoint.com
Expensive

This resort on the south end of Seven Mile Beach offers 27 oceanfront three-bedroom villas. Along with the beach, amenities include a sculptured freeform Oceanic pool, Jacuzzi and a fully-equipped fitness center. We especially liked the fact that each villa offers a private, screened patio with room for outdoor dining; villas are each equipped with full kitchens, washer/dryer, central air conditioning, a VCR, two color TVs and telephones.

GRAND CAYMANIAN BEACH CLUB AND RESORT
Crystal Harbour Drive at SafeHaven
☎ 345-949-3100, fax 345-949-3161
www.grandcaymanian.ky
Expensive

This condominium property is especially popular with golfers. It is on the North Sound, just steps from the SafeHaven golf course; there is a shuttle service to Seven Mile Beach. The resort offers 44 flexivillas in a variety of sizes, as well as four grand villas and six townhouses. Each has a full kitchen, living room, and dining room; full maid service and room service are available. The resort includes a swimming pool, children's pool, waterfront restau-

rant, on-site scuba diving, snorkeling, deep-sea fishing, wave runners, windsurfing, a private dock for boating and fishing, and concierge services.

GEORGETOWN VILLAS

West Bay Road, one mile from George Town
☎ 345-949-5172, fax 345-949-0256
Expensive

Located on the southern end of Seven Mile Beach, this 54-unit condo offers two-bedroom, two-bath units. The red-roofed buildings, each three stories tall, overlook the water and manicured grounds. The guest units each include air conditioning, cable TV, stereo, dishwasher, microwave, ceiling fans, a balcony or patio, and a cool Caribbean décor. Guests have use of a freshwater swimming pool and barbecue grill.

THE GRANDVIEW

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4511, fax 345-949-7515
Reservations: ☎ 800-488-6814
www.grandviewcondos.com
Deluxe

This 69-unit complex is right on the beach; it's one of Cayman's newest. There are 63 two-bedroom units and six three-bedroom units, all with air conditioning, cable TV, full kitchen, screened patio. Guests find plenty of activity here: two tennis courts (including one lit for night owls), fitness room, and a large pool with Jacuzzi. Maid service is offered every day except Sundays. The complex also can arrange weddings on property.

THE GREAT HOUSE

West Bay Road
Reservations: ☎ 800-235-5888
☎ 345-945-4144, fax 345-949-7471
www.caymanvillas.com
Deluxe

The Great House is one of the most expensive properties in the Cayman Islands (and that's saying a lot). This third-floor apartment, used by *The Firm* filmmakers, includes three bedrooms and a den that can become a private fourth bedroom. It has one king, one queen, and two twin beds, plus two day beds.

Other amenities are a kitchen with microwave, 3½ baths, satellite TV and VCR, dishwasher, ice maker, wine cellar, washer/dryer, dining room, and beachfront balcony. Guests have use of a freshwater pool, tennis courts, and gym on premises. This luxury accommodation is rented for a minimum of one-month and the price is princely.

INDIES SUITES

West Bay Road
Reservations: ☎ 800-654-3130
☎ 345-945-5025; fax 345-945-5024
Expensive

Although it doesn't have a beachfront location, Indies Suites is a good choice if you're looking for suite accommodations. All rooms include either a king-size or two double beds and a full-size kitchen equipped for four. They also have satellite TV, telephone, storage locker for dive gear, and a convertible sofa bed.

The family-operated all-suites hotel has a dive shop and an introductory scuba diving course is free. There's a pool, hot tub, cabana bar, boutique, mini-

mart, and complimentary continental breakfast daily.

ISLAND PINE VILLAS

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-6586, fax 345-949-0428
www.islandpinevillas.com
Expensive

Twenty one- or two-bedroom units make up this "home away from home" complex right on the beach. Guests have use of tennis facilities and can snorkel right offshore. This is a favorite with families who find not only a kid-friendly atmosphere at the property but also many nice features in the apartments, including private patios or balconies, a fully equipped kitchen with a microwave oven, a sleeper sofa, cable TV, and even beach towels and beach chairs. Rooms are bright and sunny, with white tile floors and pastel prints.

LACOVIA CONDOMINIUMS

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-7599, fax 345-949-0172
Reservations: ☎ 800-445-8945
www.lacovia.com
Deluxe

The beachfront Lacovia offers 55 one- , two- , and three-bedroom units in Spanish-inspired buildings. Conveniently located across from the Hyatt, it's relaxed and family-friendly. There are tennis facilities on site, as well as a freshwater pool and, a favorite with kids, a caged iguana that can be fed.

LONDON HOUSE
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4069, fax 345-945-4087
www.londonhouse.com.ky
londonhs@candw.ky
Deluxe

Located on Seven Mile Beach, these oceanfront condos offer many summer specials (such as stay for seven nights, pay for five). The 21 units have either two or three bedrooms, each with air conditioning, fully equipped kitchens, and maid service daily except Sundays. Tiled open-air balconies and porches overlook the sea where guests can join the parade of vacationers up and down Seven Mile Beach or watch the sunset. The complex also includes the "hammock house," daring even the most Type-A personality not to relax, thatched beach cabanas, and even a Caymanian stone barbecue pit. Guests can play tennis, snorkel or book fishing trips on site.

PLANTANA CONDOMINIUMS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4430, fax 345-945-5076
www.plantana.com.ky
Expensive to Deluxe

This 49-unit complex offers elegant condominium accommodations just steps from the sandy beach. A multi-million-dollar renovation and facelift in 2000 brings a fresh look to the property, which offers two- and four-guest apartments. These are bright and airy, decorated in island tones. Our favorite feature is the private screen porches, perfect for an afternoon nap, an evening cocktail, or a midnight chat. Each unit comes with air conditioning, as well as ceiling fans, telephones, TV, kitchens and maid service. Laundry facilities are available.

RITZ-CARLTON CONDOMINIUMS

West Bay Road
Reservations: ☎ 800-241-3333
www.ritzcarlton.com
Expensive

Currently being built adjacent to the 366-room Ritz-Carlton resort, the condominiums will add 71 apartments to the choice of accommodations here. Guests will have the use of a private nine-hole Greg Norman-designed golf course, a full-service 17,000-square-foot Spa and Fitness Center, watersports, retail promenade, and a beauty salon. At press time, completion was planned for September 2004.

SEVEN MILE BEACH RESORT & CLUB

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-0332, fax 345-949-0331
www.7mile.ky
Deluxe

Located inland but with private beach facilities, this condominium property offers two-bedroom, two-bath units. Each has a private balcony, air conditioning, telephone, cable TV, VCR, and a fully equipped kitchen. The complex includes a freshwater pool, Jacuzzi, lighted tennis court, outdoor grills, and children's play area.

Based at the resort, **Seven Mile Watersports** (☎ 345-949-0332) arranges trips to Stingray City and has complete dive facilities, including resort and certification courses.

SILVER SANDS CONDOMINIUMS
2131 West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-3343, fax 345-949-1223
Reservations: ☎ 800-327-8777
www.silversandscondos.com
Expensive

This consists of two- and three-bedroom units, each with full kitchens, telephones, air conditioning, ceiling fans, cable TV, and private patios or balconies. There is a beautiful stretch of beach with snorkeling right offshore; other activities on property include tennis, and beach volleyball. A freshwater pool has a nice beach view. All rooms have daily maid service except on Sundays; a laundry is available.

TAMARIND BAY CONDOMINIUMS
West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-4593, fax 345-945-2761
Reservations: ☎ 800-698-6593
Expensive

This 28-condo complex is on the beach. The tile-floor apartments, decorated in Caribbean colors, each includes two bedrooms, two full bathrooms, a den, living room, full kitchen, and a screened patio. There is also tennis and a freshwater pool.

TARQUYNN MANOR CONDOMINIUMS
1883 West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-4038, fax 345-945-5060
www.tarquynn.com
Reservations: ☎ 866-596-8367
Expensive

This 20-unit complex is on the north end of Seven Mile Beach. Targeting families, as well as couples and singles, the condominiums are right on the beach. All units are air conditioned and include a full kitchen, cable TV, ceiling fan, and safe. Two-bed-

room units have one bath, while three-bedroom units have two. In addition to the beach, guests have use of a game room and a freshwater pool.

TREASURE ISLAND CONDOMINIUMS

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 641-435-2001, fax 641-435-2002
Reservations: ☎ 800-999-1338
www.ticondos.com
Deluxe

This property is far more like a resort than many other condominium complexes on the island, with restaurants, shopping, and plenty of activities. Located at the south end of Seven Mile Beach, this 280-room resort includes an offshore snorkel trail. Now starting to look a little tired around the edges, the hotel nonetheless has a pretty pool area with a waterfall cascading down from the third floor restaurant.

Facilities include two freshwater pools, two whirlpools, tennis, dive operation, shopping, informal dining, bar, and lounge.

VILLAS OF THE GALLEON

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4433, fax 345-945-4705
www.villasofthegalleon.com
Deluxe

This popular 74-unit complex is in walking distance of many of the conveniences of Seven Mile Beach, including the grocery store. Apartments have white tile floors, wicker furniture, and tropical accents, and include air conditioning, telephone, TV, VCR, kitchen, laundry facilities, and maid service.

Near George Town

CORAL SANDS RESORT
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-4400, fax 345-949-4005
Expensive

Each of the 12 guest rooms at the Coral Sands includes two bedrooms, a living and dining room, and a fully equipped kitchen. The property is just about a mile from the center of George Town.

GEORGE TOWN VILLAS
George Town
☎ 345-949-5172, fax 345-949-0256
Reservations: ☎ 800-346-3315
www.grandcaymancondos.org
Deluxe

This 54-unit complex is about 1½ miles from George Town on the southern end of Seven Mile Beach. The three-story complex overlooks a large lawn with a pool and the sea. Each of the guest accommodations (with two bedrooms and two baths) includes air conditioning, satellite TV, fully equipped kitchens, and a full living room. Guests can relax on the large private patios. Activities include tennis and snorkeling.

West Bay

COBALT COAST RESORT & SUITES
West Bay at Boatswains Bay
☎ 345-946-5656, fax 345-946-5657
Reservations: ☎ 866-622-9626
Expensive to Deluxe

This stylish resort is on the island's northwest coastline, beyond the turtle farm and the tourist crowds. The new project, opened in December 2000, is con-

Cobalt Coast Resort is home to a restaurant and bar, as well as Divetech, an on-site dive center.

structed in the style of a Caribbean great house. The U-shaped property encircles a swimming pool.

Visitors find an array of accommodations at this property, with standard guest rooms and one- and two-bedroom suites, as well as villas. One-bedroom suites include a living room with dining table, a queen-sized sleeper sofa, wet bar, refrigerator, coffee maker, in-room safe, direct dial phone with data-port, cable TV, and a bedroom with a king-sized bed. Two-bedroom suites offer all the above plus a second bedroom with two double beds, as well as two full bathrooms. Guest rooms feature either a king bed or two double beds with other amenities. The resort also has two free-standing villas with many of the same features as the two-bedroom suite.

DISCOVERY POINT CLUB

West Bay
☎ 345-945-4724, fax 345-945-5051
www.discoverypointclub.com
Expensive

This beachside complex has 45 suites. The one- and two-bedroom apartments include air conditioning, screened porches or balconies, telephone, and TV. Most have kitchens, but some gardenview hotel-type units are available without kitchens. Facilities include Jacuzzi, pool, and tennis.

East End

MORRITT'S GRAND RESORT

☎ 345-947-7449 ext. 5930 or 5941, fax 345-947-3544
www.morritt.com
price scale

Also new to the market is this resort, next to Morritt's Tortuga Club in the East End. The resort is now open, though new units are still under construc-

tion. When all its phases are completed, the resort will offer 350 units, with features such as dishwashers and Jacuzzis, as well as a shopping center. The condominium property includes a spa.

GRAND CAYMAN HOMES
grandcaymanhomes.com

Grand Cayman Homes is a group of privately owned villas on the North Side and East End of the island. See their website for details about these and their other properties.

Cayman Dream (www.caymandream.com) is a two-bedroom, two-bath villa in Rum Point with room for up to eight guests (six adults maximum).

Cayman Sands (www.caymansands.com), on the North Side, has a main residence with four bedrooms and a separate guesthouse with one bedroom, with room for up to 14 (maximum of 10 adults).

Cayman Castle, on Grand Cayman's East End, is set on a low bluff overlooking the Wreck of the Ten Sails monument. The main house has four large suites, and can accommodate up to 14 (no more than 12 adults); a two-bedroom guest house on the property has room for six people.

Guest House

ERMA ELDEMIRE'S GUEST HOUSE
South Church Street
George Town
☎ 345-949-5387, fax 345-949-6987
www.eldemire.com
Inexpensive

Situated just one mile south of George Town, this guest house is a 10-minute walk from Smith Cove. Rooms include private bath, air conditioning and

ceiling fan. Accommodations are modest, but are a good choice for those seeking more personal lodgings or for those with a close eye on the budget. Guests have access to a refrigerator and hot plate (studios and the apartment have private kitchen facilities). Daily maid service except on Sunday.

Live-Aboards

If you are a dedicated diver, you might want to check out one of the live-aboards – floating hotels that literally cruise from one dive site to another. You'll spend a week with others who share your interest. You won't waste time reaching dive sites; what seems like your personal yacht for the week just whisks you there and in you go!

CAYMAN AGGRESSOR III

PO Box 10028
George Town, Grand Cayman
☎ 345-949-5551, fax 345-949-8729
Reservations: ☎ 800-348-2628
www.aggressor.com
Deluxe

This George Town-based 110-foot live-aboard has five professional staff members and takes a maximum of 16 guests at any time. In operation for 12 years, this operator is PADI, NAUI, SSI, NASDS, and YMCA affiliated and offers photo and video rentals. Divers enjoy sites off all three islands with unlimited diving.

LITTLE CAYMAN DIVER

☎ 345-948-1429, fax 345-941-1527
Reservations: ☎ 800-458-BRAC
Deluxe

Based off Little Cayman, this live-aboard accommodates 10 passengers in five cabins. Each cabin has

its own private bath. PADI, NAUI, SSI, NASDS, and YMCA affiliated. In business for 10 years. Offers video rentals.

CAYMAN DIVING LODGE
PO Box 11, East End
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-947-7555, fax 806/798-7568
Reservations: ☎ 800-TLC-DIVE
www.divelodge.com
Deluxe

This landbased all-inclusive facility is on the East End of the island. It operates like a live-aboard and includes all services from meals to dives to taxes.

Best Places To Eat

After a day of activity, whether that meant shopping for Rolexes or diving tropical reefs, many travelers look forward to sipping Dom Perignon and enjoying a meal prepared by a Cordon Bleu-trained chef as the evening's entertainment. Fine dining is very much a part of the Cayman experience and an important nightlife option. Casual dining and restaurants featuring Caribbean cuisines are other possibilities. Caymanian cuisine reflects the riches of the sea. With residents and visitors from around the world, however, the Cayman Islands also offer many types of cuisine, especially on Grand Cayman.

In the restaurant department, Grand Cayman has definitely got something for everyone, whether your tastes run to fresh island seafood or cuisines from around the world. Some of the island's restaurants have received many accolades over the last few years, gaining quite a following among those who frequent the island; others are new on the scene. Some are especially suited to couples looking for a

special night out; others welcome families seeking dishes to please even the pickiest eater in the group.

Traditional Caymanian Foods

- **Turtle**: brought to the table in the form of soup, stew, or steak.
- **Conch**: a versatile dish as an appetizer in the form of fritters, soup prepared as a chowder or thick with onions and spices as a stew, or even uncooked, marinated in lime juice as ceviche.
- **Pepperpot soup**: a savory soup made with greens and potatoes.
- **Fish rundown**: fish simmered in coconut milk with breadfruit and cassava (the source of tapioca).

Favorite Caribbean Dishes

The influences of nearby Jamaica are seen on island menus as well, especially in the jerk seasoning that ignites fish, chicken, and other meats. Menu items might include:

- **Rice and peas**: rice and red beans cooked in coconut milk.
- **Jerk**: Spicy barbecued fish, chicken, goat, or beef; spiced with Scotch bonnet pepper, nutmeg, allspice, and more and cooked over pimento wood.
- **Breadfruit**: Similar in taste to a potato, and served in as many ways.
- **Fish tea**: A broth-like soup.
- **Johnny cake**: Fried bread.
- **Patty**: A meat pie that's a Caribbean standard as popular as an American hamburger.
- **Pumpkin soup**: Made with Caribbean pumpkins, which are not sweet.

- **Saltfish**: Dried and salted codfish.
- **Ackee**: A fruit that tastes somewhat like scrambled eggs and, for breakfast, is served with saltfish.

Price Scale

Typically, you should expect to pay about US $45-75 per person for a three-course meal with wine in one of the island's finest restaurants. Travelers should expect to spend about US $6-10 for a casual lunch or dinner. Fast-food lunches or snacks can be obtained for about US $3-7 per person. Price estimates given below are per person, in US dollars.

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club, and Access are commonly accepted; Discover is accepted at some establishments.

DINING PRICE SCALE	
Pricing includes one entrée, with glass of wine and coffee.	
Inexpensive	under $25
Moderate	$25-$40
Expensive	over $40

George Town & Seven Mile Beach

Fine Dining

ALMOND TREE
North Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-2893
Moderate

Our first visit to the Almond Tree was our last night in Cayman and we quickly found that this casually elegant restaurant was the perfect end to our trip. Since 1973 this restaurant has specialized in local cuisine served in a true island atmosphere. The expansive restaurant has numerous decks both upstairs and out over the ironshore beach. We selected a table upstairs with a great view of the water and the city's lights. Other tables are on small decks out on the ironshore seaside; one large table is in a gazebo perched over the water. (If you get this table, however, be warned that you'll have lots of company when it comes tarpon feeding time!) You'll find a full menu of Caymanian options from lobster to coconut shrimp to turtle.

BENJAMIN'S ROOF SEAFOOD RESTAURANT
West Bay Road at Coconut Plaza, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-4080
Expensive

When you're ready to go all out, head to this elegant restaurant that serves clams casino, marinated conch, turtle steak, lobster, shrimp, crab, scallops, and a full line of meat and pasta dishes, including New York strip steak, lamb chops, chicken cordon bleu, and fettucine alfredo. Don't miss the lobster Churchill, cooked in white wine and a mustard sauce. Open for dinner from 5:30 to 10:30 pm; an early bird menu is available from 3 to 5:30.

CASANOVA RISTORANTE
Old Fort Building, George Town
☎ 345-949-7633
Moderate

Specializing in romantic dining, this restaurant is decorated with Italian artwork. An extensive menu offers penne pasta sautéed with Caribbean lobster, linguine with clams, potato dumplings with homemade pesto sauce, veal piccata, and many seafood dishes. Open for lunch Monday through Saturday, and dinner nightly. Reservations suggested.

CASA HAVANA RESTAURANT
Westin Casuarina, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-3800
Moderate

Whether you're staying at the Westin Casuarina or somewhere else along Seven Mile Beach, consider the Casa Havana for a fine dining experience. On one trip to Grand Cayman, we arrived late on the island and slumped our way along to the Westin to check in. Too tired to hit West Bay Road in search of a restaurant, we simply went downstairs to the Casa Havana, which instantly perked up our spirits. This restaurant is one of the island's most lauded eateries and is the signature restaurant of the Westin, complete with white-glove service and a romantic atmosphere. You can dine indoors or outside (our choice).

If you're lucky, the resident harpist will be playing during your visit to Casa Havana.

Menu selections include glazed swordfish, roast pork tenderloin, and filet mignon. Be sure to order the Caesar salad, prepared tableside. Reservations are suggested. The dress is casually elegant.

EDOARDO'S
At Coconut Plaza, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4408
Moderate

This restaurant has been a Cayman fixture for a decade. It serves fresh seafood, pasta dishes, and gourmet pizzas made by Chef Randall Burns.

GRAND OLD HOUSE
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-9333
Expensive

The Grand Old House is one of Grand Cayman's most lauded restaurants, and with good reason. We dined here one evening as a wedding reception took place under a huge tent set up on the grounds – it was beautiful.

The Grand Old House is indeed both grand and old, dating back to 1908 when it was built by a merchant and lawyer from Boston. Once surrounded by a coconut plantation, the house was used for entertaining and lavish parties in its early days; later the structure became a hospital for soldiers wounded in World War II and a storm shelter during hurricanes. Today the home showcases the work of Chef Kandathil Mathai, who has cooked for Prince Charles, Princess Diana, Margaret Thatcher, Princess Anne and the Reagan family. The menu includes entrées such as tenderloin of black Angus beef; New Zealand baby rack of lamb; pork Zurichoise with mushrooms, Chardonnay cream sauce and roasted potatoes; baked filet of dolphin; and potato-crusted tuna.

The dolphin referred to on restaurant menus is a fish – also known as dorado or mahi mahi.

House specialties are lobster tail sautéed with shallots, mushrooms, fresh tomatoes and beurre blanc; baked shrimp "Grand Old House," cooked with fresh local herbs, white wine, and served with hollandaise sauce; turtle steak Cayman-style; pan-fried crispy

duck breast flamed in Cointreau accompanied by a gâteau of sweet potato; and Wiener schnitzel with spätzle and red cabbage. The dishes are accompanied by an extensive wine list. The restaurant is open for lunch Monday through Friday from 11: 45 am to 2 pm, and dinner Monday through Saturday from 6 to 10 pm. Reservations are required.

LANTANA'S RESTAURANT AND BAR
West Bay Road at the Caribbean Club
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-5595
Expensive

Save Lantana's for a special evening out during your vacation. We love the innovative cuisine served at this elegant restaurant. The chef offers an excellent menu featuring spicy Cuban black bean soup, jerk pork tenderloin, grilled yellowfin tuna with cilantro linguine, and more, followed by tropical coconut cream pie with white chocolate shavings and mango sauce, or frozen Cayman lime pie with raspberry sauce and whipped cream.

THE LINKS RESTAURANT
The Links at SafeHaven Golf Course
☎ 345-949-5988
Expensive

Located upstairs in the golf club, this air-conditioned restaurant is a favorite with duffers for both lunch and dinner. The lunch menu offers fried scampi, fish and chips, burgers, and steaks. Dinner includes a wide variety of dishes, from salmon steak to Jamaican jumbo shrimp to veal schnitzel and Brazilian pork. Open for lunch from 11:30 am to 2:30 pm; dinner is served from 6 to 9:30 pm.

LOBSTER POT
North Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-2736
Expensive

This second-floor restaurant, built with a view of the George Town Harbour, serves up seafood accompanied by an extensive wine list. Lobster and surf-and-turf are the order of the day, as well as grilled salmon filet, mango chicken, Cayman turtle steak, seafood curry, and cracked conch.

Save this one for a special night out; prices are high, even by Cayman standards. A children's menu is available here; if you bring the kids, don't miss tarpon feeding time between 6:30 and 6:45. The restaurant is open for lunch on weekdays only and dinner nightly.

RISTORANTE BELLA CAPRI
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4755
Moderate

Enjoy seafood or Italian specialties at this casual eatery serving a well-rounded menu of lasagne, veal, seafood, lobster, and steak.

Open for lunch from 11:45 am to 2 pm on weekdays; dinner is served from 5:30 to 10:30 pm. Reservations are suggested.

Informal Dining

BILLY'S PLACE
North Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-0470
Inexpensive

This fun eatery is a good introduction to Cayman cuisine. Favorites include fish Cayman-style, jerk conch or pork, conch stew, ox tail, and stew beans.

Jerk chicken pizza, jerk blue marlin, jerk burgers and tandoori shrimp are also popular. Indian dishes such as curried chicken, shrimp or goat, and chicken tikka (marinated chicken baked in a clay oven) round out the menu. Open for dinner daily, and for lunch Monday through Saturday.

BLUE PARROT
South Church Street at Coconut Harbour
George Town
☎ 345-949-9094
Inexpensive to Moderate

Not necessarily the place to go for a quiet dinner, this restaurant boasts the island's largest TV screen. Order up grilled seafood, sandwiches, and salads for lunch and dinner.

CAPTAIN BRYAN'S PATIO BY THE SEA
North Church Street at Mary Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-6163
Moderate to Expensive

We enjoyed a great sunset meal out on the patio of this casual spot. Most appetizers and entrées are prepared with an island flair, such as a red conch chowder that's a meal in itself, pan-fried red snapper, "seafood pasta from hell" (shrimp, scallops, lobster and fish in a hot and spicy citrus sauce), and favorites like coconut shrimp.

Make reservations for seats on the patio at Captain Bryan's.

CAPTAIN MORGAN'S STEAKHOUSE
West Shore Centre (near Hyatt), Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-2333
Moderate

This fun eatery is known for its tabletop grills, where you cook your own steak. Other menu offerings include Caribbean lobster tail, shrimp, tuna, chicken,

turtle steak, and swordfish, all served with baked potato, corn, and salads.

CECIL'S
Kaibo Yacht Club
Cayman Kai
☎ 345-947-9975
Expensive

Free ferry service from SafeHaven takes diners from the Seven Mile Beach area to this east side restaurant in just over 15 minutes. Once here, you'll be rewarded with views of the North Sound, all enjoyed with dishes that range from Caribbean to Cajun. Start with oysters Rockefeller, Creole barbecued shrimp, Louisiana crab cakes, or calamari. Entrées include pan-seared tuna with honey-ginger-sesame sauce, Caribbean lobster tail stuffed with seafood, catfish with Louisiana crawfish sauce, and Black Angus filet mignon. The restaurant is open Tuesday through Sunday for dinner; call for ferry times and reservations.

THE COFFEE BAR
The Strand Shopping Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-6850
Inexpensive

This coffee bar is a favorite spot for breakfast, which starts at 7 am. New York-style bagels, homemade quiche, croissants, muffins, cinnamon rolls and full breakfast platters with egg, bacon and cheddar are all accompanied by a large selection of international coffees. Daily gourmet lunch specialties available.

CROW'S NEST
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-9366
Moderate to Expensive

West Indian favorites fill the menu here. Start with conch fritters or a jerk chicken sampler and then enjoy red bean soup or conch chowder. Entrées include Jamaican chicken curry, Turtle Farm steak topped with a peppery cream vermouth sauce, and red snapper, mahi mahi, mako shark, or swordfish prepared grilled, pan-fried, or blackened. Open for lunch Monday through Saturday, dinner daily.

DAVID'S RESTAURANT
Morritt's Tortuga Club
East End
☎ 345-947-7449 extension 5939
Moderate

This restaurant, with both indoor and outdoor seating, serves a menu that's varied nightly. On Monday, the beach barbecue features jerk pork and barbecued chicken. Tuesday brings a three-course dinner at comedy night while Wednesday diners choose from stir fry, seafood or fajitas. Thursday means Caribbean dishes, while Friday features an à la carte menu. Steak is featured Saturday nights while snapper and an à la carte menu are served Sundays. Reservations recommended.

DECKERS
West Bay Road, in front of the Hyatt
☎ 345-945-6600
Moderate

You can't miss this restaurant: just look for the double decker bus out front. This casual eatery, right on West Bay Road, combines a pub atmosphere with the fun of a beach bar. Dine outside if you can (al-

though you should expect a little traffic noise). Options include appetizers like conch chowder, conch fritters, coconut shrimp; save room for main courses such as Caribbean lobster, mahi mahi in an island sweet potato crust, mesquite-grilled shrimp, or beef tenderloin. Reservations are recommended.

EATS CROCODILE ROCK CAFE

Falls Shopping Mall on West Bay Road
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-5288
Inexpensive

Don't miss the strawberry-topped French toast at Eats!

The first time we dined at Eats, we were staying at the Westin Casuarina and were on the lookout for a place within walking distance (it was our first night on the island and we weren't looking forward to tackling left-lane driving in the dark). We scooted across West Bay Road to Eats and quickly discovered one of our favorite casual restaurants in the region. This eatery, decorated with movie memorabilia in a diner atmosphere, is a favorite with locals and residents. We enjoyed quesadillas and old fashioned burgers that first trip, but other dishes are equally tempting: chicken fajitas, catch of the day, shepherd's pie, stir fry, hot sandwiches, and more.

Daily lunch specials include burgers, soups, salads, sandwiches and fajitas. Dinner offerings include stir-fry dishes, steak, seafood, fajitas, and pasta.

FERDINAND'S CARIBBEAN CAFE

Westin Casuarina, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-3800
Moderate

Named for King Ferdinand, this casual restaurant features Caribbean dishes, as well as sandwiches and breakfast. You can dine indoors or outside.

GOLDEN PAGODA
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-5475
Inexpensive to Moderate

Chef's specialties include roast pork with green beans; pork ribs in black bean sauce; shrimp in lobster sauce; and beef with snow peas. Carry-out available.

HEMINGWAY'S
Hyatt Britannia Beach Club
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5700

This fun eatery is right on the beach, with indoor and outdoor seating. Start with pepperpot soup or conch and clam chowder but don't miss the Cayman-style conch fritters with chipotle tartar sauce.

Entrée selections include spiny Caribbean lobster tail, roasted rack of lamb with an herb couscous and Caribbean ratatouille, pan-fried snapper on a zesty couscous with a sweet pepper essence.

THE HERITAGE CAFE
Boggy Sand Road, West Bay
(No phone)
Inexpensive

Sometimes a bad situation can turn good and that's just what happened to us one day up in West Bay. After a day of touring the island, our rental car decided to die on a Sunday afternoon up in quiet West Bay. Dead as a rock, the car refused to start. Nice West Bay residents offered us the use of their telephone and we waited for the delivery of a new rental car from George Town. We knew we had an hour's wait ahead of us.

So we set out walking. Strolling up Boggy Sand Road, one of the prettiest streets on Grand Cayman, we found The Heritage Café and our problem of kill-

ing an hour was solved. This blue building houses a kitchen that produces some of the most genuine Caymanian dishes found on the island. Grab a picnic table and order kingfish, fish tea, and other local favorites. The hours here are limited: Fridays, 2 pm to 2 am; Saturday, 9 am to 1 am; and Sunday, 9 am to 4 pm. Ultra-casual.

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Breakers
☎ 345-947-2047
Moderate to Expensive

As its name suggests, this eatery is housed in a lighthouse. It's on the East End – a bit of a drive for most, but worth the effort. Here you can enjoy lunch and dinner either indoors or outside (our recommendation: the view's terrific and you'll be serenaded by the sound of the sea). This restaurant serves conch chowder, jerk shrimp pitas, and seafood Caesar salads. Several Italian dishes are offered as well.

LONE STAR BAR

West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5175
Inexpensive to Moderate

The Lone Star Bar is adjacent to the Hyatt Regency entrance.

When we get homesick for Texas during our stay in the Cayman Islands, we drop in the Lone Star Bar for a quick fix of home. The atmosphere is rollicking and fun, a mix of both locals and vacationers who come to enjoy a drink and some conversation in this T-shirt-decorated bar. The restaurant specializes in Tex-Mex food. Monday and Thursday are all-you-can-eat fajita nights; on Thursday lobster is served (the specialty of the house). Wednesday brings in steak lovers, Friday is a favorite with prime rib buffs and Saturday is barbecue night.

RED GINGER
North Side Surf Inn, North Side
☎ 345-947-1431
Moderate

You wouldn't think that you'd find one of the island's best loved restaurants so far out on the North Side, but Red Ginger is definitely a favorite with locals in the know. With its long line of cars parked along the road, you'll know that reservations are a must. The casual restaurant has a view of the waves but the menu offers plenty of distraction: grilled beef tenderloin, poached Chilean salmon, jerked lamb chops, pan-fried turtle medallions, potato gnocchi, baked eggplant gâteau, and more. Takeout is available, and you'll find a children's menu as well.

RISTORANTE PAPPAGALLO
Conch Point Road, West Bay
☎ 345-949-1119 or 949-3479
Moderate to Expensive

The beauty of this restaurant hints at the specialness of a meal here. A thatched roof, made from over 100,000 thatch palm leaves, shields a building constructed of bamboo, local stone, and marble. Parrots, cockatoos, and macaws lend their voices to the exotic atmosphere created by the setting: the restaurant is perched on the shores of a small natural lake in a bird sanctuary. Meals here are special as well, featuring Northern Italian cuisine. Homemade pastas, seafood, and fine wines make this restaurant well worth the drive for those staying in the Seven Mile Beach area. Dinner is served from 6 to 10:30 pm daily.

SEAHARVEST
South Sound at Sunset House, George Town
☎ 345-945-1383
Moderate to Expensive

Start with smoked salmon, marinated conch, lobster fritters, or coquille St. Jacques (sea scallops with tomatoes) at this elegant seafood restaurant.

The menu also includes a selection of pasta dishes such as seafood lasagne, chicken parmagiana, and cappellini pompadour, angel hair pasta with sun dried tomatoes, basil and black mushrooms.

THE WHARF
West Bay Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-2231
http://wharf.ky
Expensive

Just past George Town at the start of the beach, The Wharf is a favorite with couples and one of our favorite Caribbean sunset spots. This seaside restaurant and bar is open for lunch on weekdays and dinner nightly with a menu featuring continental and Caribbean cuisine, but the Wharf is best experienced in the evening hours. Located right on the water's edge, the open-air bar offers an uninterrupted view of the setting sun. A school of huge tarpon lingers below the deck, waiting for scheduled handouts, and live music is offered most evenings.

Rum Point

RUM POINT RESTAURANT
Rum Point
☎ 345-947-9412
Moderate to Expensive

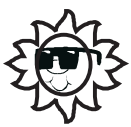
Open for dinner only, this eatery features island favorites like shrimp, lobster, and conch, as well as

pasta dishes, prime rib, and chicken. The restaurant looks much like a Caymanian house, with a wide, screened porch and big breezy style. Reservations are suggested for this popular eatery, especially on Friday and Monday nights when the Barefoot Man performs.

WRECK BAR AND GRILLE
Rum Point
☎ 345-947-9412
Inexpensive to Moderate

Every time we visit Grand Cayman, we budget time for a lunch at this beach grill, a fun Cayman experience that combines island food, a good beach bar, and a great beach all in one. Dine on burgers, club sandwiches, patties, conch fritters, BBQ chicken salad, fisherman's salad, and jerk pork sandwiches in the comfort of your bathing suit. Table service to the beachside picnic tables makes this an enjoyable way to lunch on a relaxing Rum Point day. You won't find table service on Saturdays, when the grill serves an island buffet with everything from jerk chicken to plantains. The buffet lunch costs CI $12 including jerk chicken, ribs, rice and peas. The Barefoot Man entertains here from 3 to 6 pm on Saturdays, so grab a table close to the bandstand.

Sunup To Sundown



The Cayman Islands has long been synonymous with scuba diving, but this destination also presents plenty of other types of fun in the sun. However you may define soft adventure – walking, birding, golf, hiking, snorkeling, bicycling, fishing, or horseback riding – Grand Cayman offers professional assistance, rental facilities, and even instruction for those new to the sport.

If you're looking for something more in the spectator realm, you'll find that too. Take a ride on a real submarine, tour the turtle farm, shop until you drop, stroll a verdant botanical garden, or explore historic districts. The choices are enough to satisfy any visitor.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

The **Cayman Islands Watersports Operators Association** (CIWOA) estimates that about one third of all overnight visitors are scuba divers and about 80% enjoy some form of watersports during their stay. About a quarter of all cruise ship passengers to the Cayman Islands partake in watersports.

In & On The Water

The Cayman Islands are universally recognized as a top **dive destination**. Since 1957, with the founding of the Caribbean's first dive operation on Grand Cayman, these islands have caught the attention of the diving world. Bob Soto established this first Cayman dive operation and today over 40 dive operators provide service on the three islands.

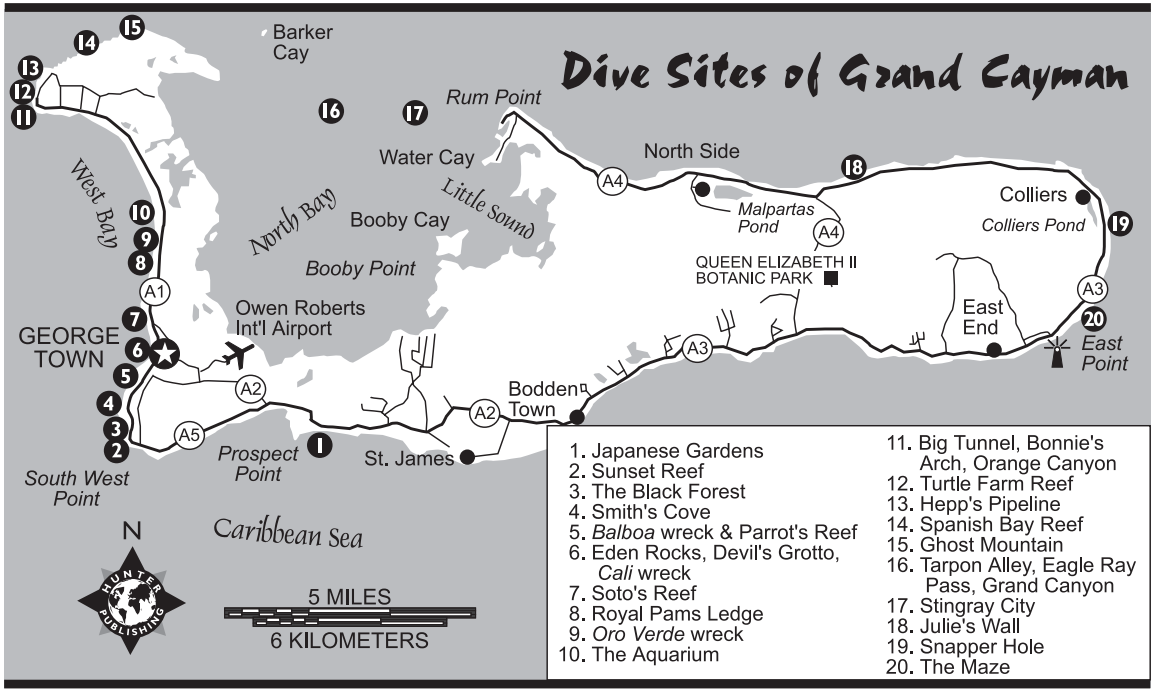
Although these islands are tops in the scuba world, non-divers will find plenty of activity both in and out of water. **Snorkeling** is a popular pastime and an excellent way to enjoy the area's marine wonders.

The fish seen in these waters also attract anglers from around the globe. Visitors can participate in a **deep-sea charter** or try their luck with **reef** or **bonefishing**. Bonefishing guides are found on each of the three islands.

WHY IS CAYMAN SO POPULAR?

- Dive sites start close to shore in shallow water (25 to 60 feet).
- A variety of dive experiences are available, for beginners and advanced divers.
- Quality dive operations are found throughout the islands.
- Instruction is readily available through any of the certification agencies (PADI, NAUI, SSI, NASDS, and YMCA).
- Green sea turtles are often sighted on dives.
- Scuba instruction is available in many languages.
- Much of the marine life is approachable, such as the rays at Stingray City.
- Visibility is excellent year-round.
- The leeward side of each island ensures calm waters (dive operations are so confident of this that many guarantee diving 365 days a year).
- Strict conservation laws have protected the reefs.
- The Caribbean's oldest underwater photography school is located here.
- A hyperbaric recompression chamber is available 24 hours a day.

Sailing excursions, from rollicking "pirate" cruises to tranquil sunset sails, are popular on Grand Cayman. Most include hotel pickup. Do-it-yourselfers can also rent watercraft, including Hobie cats, Wave-


Dive Sites of Grand Cayman
Barker Cay
Rum Point
Water Cay
North Side
Colliers
Colliers Pond
East Point
East End
West Bay
North Bay
Booby Cay
Booby Point
Little Sound
Malpartas Pond
QUEEN ELIZABETH II BOTANIC PARK
Owen Roberts Int'l Airport
GEORGE TOWN
Bodden Town
St. James
Prospect Point
South West Point
Caribbean Sea
N
5 MILES
6 KILOMETERS
A1
A2
A3
A4
A5
1. Japanese Gardens
2. Sunset Reef
3. The Black Forest
4. Smith's Cove
5. Balboa wreck & Parrot's Reef
6. Eden Rocks, Devil's Grotto, Cali wreck
7. Soto's Reef
8. Royal Pams Ledge
9. Oro Verde wreck
10. The Aquarium
11. Big Tunnel, Bonnie's Arch, Orange Canyon
12. Turtle Farm Reef
13. Hepp's Pipeline
14. Spanish Bay Reef
15. Ghost Mountain
16. Tarpon Alley, Eagle Ray Pass, Grand Canyon
17. Stingray City
18. Julie's Wall
19. Snapper Hole
20. The Maze

EDEN ROCK
DIVING CENTER

Eden Rock Diving Center
offers the best diving value on the island.
Boat packages with or without accommodation,
including spectacular shore diving.
Cayman's easiest, most famous & fun dive!

(345) 949-7243, edenrock@candw.ky
www.edenrockdive.com

Runners, and Sunfish. **Windsurfers** generally head out to either Seven Mile Beach or Grand Cayman's East End, considered the most challenging for advanced windsurfers. And for those who want to glide along but let someone else do the work, **parasailing** operators are found along most of Seven Mile Beach.

Scuba Diving

Even among the "been there, done that" scuba crowd, Grand Cayman is a winner. Travelers lucky enough to visit the island will find a wealth of dive sites.

Over 200 sites lure divers of all abilities, from beginners looking for shore excursions and shallow reef dives to advanced divers looking for wreck and cave explorations. You can get professional assistance from dive operators on each of the three islands, including resort courses where you'll have the op-

portunity to sample diving after a one-day course. Full certification courses will award you a "C" card, and advanced courses teach you the use of scuba computers, the skills of drift diving, and even underwater photography. Grand Cayman offers approximately 130 dive spots, many less than a half-mile from shore. The island is surrounded by approximately 60 miles of dropoffs. One of the most popular shallow dive sites is **Stingray City** on the North Sound; this 12-foot dive is memorable for the southern Atlantic stingrays that divers and snorkelers can hand-feed. Incredible visibility, measured at 100 to 150 feet, helps make these islands such spectacular dive destinations. With year-round water temperatures of 77□ to 83□, visitors can dive comfortably and enjoy an underwater playground that's filled with marine life.

An excellent source of information on Cayman diving is the Dive Cayman website (www.divecayman.ky) operated by the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. Here you'll find links to local dive operators, information on dive sites, and details of upcoming special events aimed at divers. You can also sign up to receive a free e-mail newsletter with Cayman diving news.

Dive Operators

Grand Cayman is one of the world's top dive destinations so, predictably enough, you'll find a long list of expert dive operators from which to choose. Many dive shops will pick you up in complimentary shuttles; check with operators for transportation arrangements.

ABANKS' DIVING
96 South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-945-1444, www.abanksdivers.com.ky

AMBASSADOR DIVERS
George Town
☎ 345-949-8839, www.ambassadordivers.com

AQUA ADVENTURES
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-1616

AQUANAUTS LTD.
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 888-SUN-NUTS, 345-945-1990

BOB SOTO'S DIVING
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 800-BOB-SOTO, www.bobsotosdiving.com.ky

CAPT. CROSBY'S WATERSPORTS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4049

CAPT. DON'S
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-946-4386, www.caymandiver.ky

CAYMAN DIVING SCHOOL
George Town
☎ 345-949-4729, www.caymandivingschool.com

☛ IT'S THE LAW!

Strict marine conservation laws ensure the safety of the reefs and the marine life. Dive sites are protected with permanent moorings (over 200 in the islands) so boats can moor rather than anchor and risk damage to the fragile reefs.

SHARK DIVES

Looking for thrills? The Cayman Diving Lodge offers a unique Shark Dive. Caribbean reef sharks up to seven feet long are often spotted on these guided dives off Jack McKennedy's Canyon.

CAYMAN DIVING LODGE
East End
☎ 800-TLC-DIVE or 345-947-7555
www.divelodge.com

CAYMAN MARINE LABORATORY
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5586

DIVE 'N STUFF
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-2822
www.divenstuff.com

DIVETECH/TURTLE REEF DIVERS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-1700
www.divetech.com

DIVERS DOWN
Coconut Plaza, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-916-3751
www.diversdown.net

DIVERS SUPPLY
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-7621
diversup@candw.ky

DON FOSTER'S DIVE CAYMAN LTD.
George Town
☎ 800-83-DIVER or 345-945-5132
www.donfosters.com

EDEN ROCK DIVING CENTER LTD.
George Town
☎ 345-949-7243, www.edenrockdive.com

FISHEYE OF CAYMAN
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 800-887-8569 or 345-945-4209, www.fisheye.com

NEPTUNE'S DIVERS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-3990, www.neptunesdivers.com

OFF THE WALL DIVERS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-7525, www.otwdivers.com

OCEAN FRONTIERS
East End
☎ 800-544-6576 or 345-947-7500
www.oceanfrontiers.com

OLLEN MILLER'S SUN DIVERS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-6606, sundiver@candw.ky

PETER MILBURN'S DIVE CAYMAN
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5770, www.petermilburndivecayman.com

RED SAIL SPORTS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 800-255-6425 or 345-945-5965
www.redsail.com, www.redsailcayman.com

RIVER SPORT DIVERS
West Bay
☎ 345-949-1181, rivsport@candw.ky

SEASPORTS
West Bay
☎ 345-949-3965, seasport@candw.ky

SUNSET DIVERS
George Town
☎ 800-854-4767 or 345-949-7111
www.sunsethouse.com

TORTUGA DIVERS LTD.
East End
☎ 345-947-2097
tortugad@candw.ky, www.tidivers.com

TREASURE ISLAND DIVERS
George Town
☎ 800-872-7552 or 345-949-4456

WALL TO WALL DIVING
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-6608
www.walltowalldiving.com

Dive & Snorkel Sites

George Town

The bay at George Town has a wealth of good dive sites, all easy to reach.

THE BLACK FOREST

Beautiful black coral and waving gorgonians make this site indeed seem like the Black Forest. Located at 60 to 100 feet, this wall dive is just off the South West Point. It is not accessible as a shore dive.

EDEN ROCKS & DEVIL'S GROTTO

Eden Rock Dive Shop on South Church Road is the entry point for one of George Town's most popular dive sites. Eden Rock and the Devil's Grotto, about 150 yards from the shore, are shallow dives. Both are a labyrinth of grottos running out from the shore. Eden Rock is popular not only with divers but also with snorkelers who enjoy the easy entrance and a view of the tunnels and often large tarpon.

Eden Rock and Devil's Grotto have a depth of 30-50 feet.

JAPANESE GARDENS

This dive lies 30 to 60 feet below the surface off the reef at South Sound, just east of George Town, and is often recommended for beginning divers. Like a little bonsai forest, the area is dotted with staghorn corals and is a good site for underwater photographers.

PARROT'S REEF

Parrot's Reef and nearby Sunset Reef (see below) are just yards from shore. Parrot's Reef has a depth of 30-60 feet.

SMITHS COVE

Although often considered a snorkel site only, Smiths Cove on South Church Street just south of George Town is an easy shore dive as well. The reef starts a few feet from the surface and divers can also explore the West Wall from here.

SOTO'S REEF

Offshore from Soto's Dive Center, this shallow site is also popular with snorkelers.

SUNSET REEF

Just offshore from the Sunset House Resort, this site is a popular stop for divers wanting to do some underwater photography.

THE WRECK OF THE BALBOA

The hurricane of 1932 accounted for the wreck of this freighter, which today lies 25 to 40 feet below the surface. Some of the ship is still intact, although parts of it were blown away to clear the traffic channel. This is a popular night dive, offering a manageable depth (during daytime hours, this site sits right in the George Town Harbour waterway, making it too busy). Rich with marine life from corals to spon-

ges to brilliant parrotfish, this is one of Grand Cayman's top dive sites.

WRECK OF THE CALI

One of the top snorkel destinations is the wreck of the *Cali*. Located a short swim from Calico Jack's in just 20 feet of water about 100 feet offshore, this wreck is a good opportunity for snorkelers to view a wreck site, an experience usually reserved for advanced scuba divers. Save the *Cali* for your departure day when you can't scuba dive. Sitting in just over 20 feet of water; it's a great snorkel experience and a good way to finish off your Cayman vacation.

SMITHS COVE

Although often considered a snorkel site, Smiths Cove, off South Church Street just south of George Town, is an easy shore dive as well. The reef starts just a few feet from the surface and divers can also explore the West Wall from this location. Snorkelers will find another good spot just south of Smiths Cove Park, along South Church street. This free park has good snorkeling among the rocks on its north side; covered picnic tables and plenty of shade make this a popular lunch site as well.

The Eden Rocks spot is also frequented by snorkelers. Another favorite is Soto's Reef, sometimes called Passion Reef; it's behind Soto's Dive Shop (below the Lobster Pot restaurant on North Church Street).

East End

EAGLE RAY PASS

East of Tarpon Alley and across from the main channel into the North Sound, Eagle Ray Pass is named for the rays that are often sighted here. At 40 to 100 feet, this wall dive appeals to divers of varying skill levels.

GRAND CANYON
Near the Sandbar west of Rum Point, this 80- to 110-foot wall dive is for intermediate and advanced divers.

JULIE'S WALL
This dive site lies to the east of the place where Frank Sound Road intersects with the main road. It is 60 to 100 feet below the surface. An intermediate level dive, the wall is home to black coral formations and rays are often spotted here.

THE MAZE
This is a honeycomb of tunnels that form a veritable maze. It's on the South Channel, not far from the Wreck of Ten Sails. This site is 60 to 100 feet below, and is best dived by intermediate and advanced divers as some of the passages lead much deeper.

SNAPPER HOLE
A 30- to 60-foot dive, this is a favorite with beginners but still offers tunnels, plenty of marine life, and even an anchor from an 1872 shipwreck. The site is on the East End outside the reef that forms Colliers Bay.

TARPON ALLEY
This wall dive of 60 to 100 feet is near Stingray City, just outside North Sound. A favorite with underwater photographers, this site has dropoffs, canyons, and, of course, huge schools of shiny tarpon.

STINGRAY CITY
Just about anyone who has ever heard of the Cayman Islands has heard of Stingray City. This is the top watersports attraction in the Cayman Islands. Here, in the mouth of North Sound about halfway between the West Bay and Rum Point, fishermen once cleaned their catch, attracting large Southern Atlantic stingrays. These creatures have become ac-

customed to being handled by participants in daily snorkeling excursions.

FEEDING STINGRAYS

Don't miss the chance to feed the rays some squid. Just pinch the squid between your fingers, arch your fingers back like you're about to slap someone, and put your hand down in the water: the greedy stingrays will do the rest. If you don't arch your fingers back, the rays might suck up your fingers and give you a little scare. They don't have teeth, but their lips are a firm cartilage that will give you a jolt.

Typically about 30 stingrays frequent the area so you're just about guaranteed the opportunity to pet and swim alongside these beautiful creatures.

After feeding the stingrays, most operators then take snorkelers over to Coral Gardens, a beautiful snorkel area with several large coral heads, fans, and abundant marine life.

Stingray City is visited by many watersports operators, who offer half- and full-day excursions that include stops at both deep and shallow spots. Operators depart from all areas of the island for this adventure. The site is now one of the most popular in the Caribbean. Often called "the world's best 12-foot dive," it can be equally enjoyed by both snorkelers and scuba divers. Truly, this is one experience not to be missed. We have done the Stingray City experience several times using different operators and have never left disappointed. Nothing can quite prepare you for the experience of petting, feeding, and being caressed by the stingrays. The trip out on the

North Sound to the site is quick and scenic. After mooring, some vacationers are a little cautious about heading into the waters (the stingrays are far less shy), but we've noticed that all but the most nervous swimmer enjoys this experience.

On the shallow stop, The Sandbar, visitors stand (as still as possible to prevent kicking up sand and lowering visibility), while the stingrays swoop by, often brushing participants like some large rubbery Frisbee. Operators begin the feeding and, as visitors become more comfortable with the process, they are allowed to feed and even hold the large rays. Trips cost about US $45 per person and typically include three stops. The deepest is Stingray City at about 12 feet, followed by the shallower Sandbar, about three feet deep.

★ TIP

Bring along an old T-shirt to wear on the Stingray City snorkel excursions. Your back is exposed to a lot of sun during this trip and, with the coolness of the water and your excitement over the stingrays, you may not notice you are getting a bad burn. Pack plenty of sunscreen as well.

West Bay

The West Bay, just north of Seven Mile Beach, has many good dive sites. These locations are also very easy to reach for those staying on Seven Mile Beach.

BIG TUNNEL

Swim-throughs and canyons and a depth of 60 to 100 feet make this a favorite with intermediate and

advanced divers. Located off the North West Point (close to Bonnie's Arch and the Orange Canyon).

BONNIE'S ARCH

Just off North West Point, this 50- to 70-foot dive is a great place for photos because of its arch formation, covered with corals and sponges. Good for beginners, the dive offers even more than the spectacular arch, with many types of marine life, from tarpon to tangs.

GHOST MOUNTAIN

At North Point, West Bay, you will see a large coral pinnacle, its base lying on a sand slope at a depth of 140 feet. Large schools of jacks swim in and out of the cave at the base of the pinnacle. This intermediate to advanced wall dive is 70 to 100 feet below the surface.

HEPP'S PIPELINE

A 30- to 60-foot dive for beginners/intermediate divers not far from the Cayman Turtle Farm. It has two mini-walls and can be a shore dive.

ORANGE CANYON

A 60- to 100-foot dive, this one is favored by intermediate and advanced levels. Named for its orange elephant ear sponges, the wall is painted with color. Located near Bonnie's Arch.

SPANISH BAY REEF

You can walk right out to this shallow reef dive (30 to 60 feet) near Spanish Bay Reef Resort. This site is also good for snorkeling (although the waters can be rough in this area).

TRINITY CAVES

This dive in West Bay is down 40 to 100 feet. Beginners can enjoy a look at spectacular corals and fans, while intermediate and advanced divers can enter

the three channels that wind their way to a wall where larger marine species might be spotted.

TURTLE FARM REEF

Just east of the turtle farm, a short swim from the shore, this site offers a steep mini-wall rising from a 60-foot sand bottom. You can do this as a shore dive or enjoy the site as a snorkeler.

WARNING!

Touching coral causes the organism to die.

Seven Mile Beach

Seven Mile Beach has several good dive sites, although many boats head out from here with divers for sites in George Town or other areas of the island.

THE AQUARIUM

With a name like The Aquarium, this 30- to 50-foot dive has to be good. Look for a wide variety of fish on this dive off the upper end of Seven Mile Beach. Goatfish, snapper, parrotfish, and more await on this beginner-level dive.

ROYAL PALMS LEDGE

This site, just offshore from the Marriott, goes to a depth of about 50 feet. There's a tunnel that's a favorite with divers.

WRECK OF THE ORO VERDE

About a half-mile off the beach at the site of the former Holiday Inn (soon to be home of a new Ritz-Carlton; see page 153), the *Oro Verde* is a favorite wreck for novice divers because of its shallow position (25 to 50 feet). The ship was used by drug smugglers and in 1980 was scuttled. Today the gold lies in

its rich marine life; the high that divers get from the myriad colors is a completely legal one.

Specialty Excursions

SASY

If you would like to introduce your children to the joys of scuba diving, Cayman is the place. Thanks to a new program operated by Red Sail Sports, children as young as four can now have a taste of scuba diving. SASY, or **Supplied Air Snorkeling for Youths**, is a scuba unit customized for young bodies. Developed in the Cayman Islands by Capt. Wayne Hasson, a father of two young children, the unit combines a regulator so young divers can breathe from a continuous air supply and a buoyancy compensator to keep children floating safely near the surface. Units are available for use at Red Sail Sports (www.redsail.com) locations at the Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman, Westin Casuarina Resort and Marriott Grand Cayman."Grand Cayman is the perfect place for kids to learn to use SASY," explains Red Sail Sports Operations Manager Rod McDowell. "The waters here are clear and calm, and there's a lot for them to see. Parents can now take their children along on a dive boat, and together the whole family can explore our underwater world."

Lunch & Snorkel Trips

Although these islands are world famous for their diving, many attractions can be enjoyed in water just a few feet deep with a mask and snorkel.

Only yards from shore, even first-time snorkelers can enjoy a look at colorful corals, graceful fans, and fish that include friendly sergeant majors, butterfly fish, and shy damselfish. And travelers shouldn't feel that wreck diving is for scuba divers only. The

wreck of the *Cali* is in shallow water and is an easy snorkel trip (see above).

Snorkel excursions are also offered by many dive operators, the most popular being the excursion to Stingray City. Typically these trips include drinks and often lunch following the snorkeling adventure. Complimentary shuttle services are available from some hotels and condominiums.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

Operators will supply snorkels, masks and fins but you don't really need fins for the snorkel excursions. If you are not an experienced snorkeler, fins can be tough to control and you'll run the risk of kicking (and thereby killing) coral formations.

The snorkel excursions on Grand Cayman cover a small area and you can float and admire the marine life without worrying about having to swim hard and keep up with a group.

Lunch-Snorkel Trip Operators

BAYSIDE WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-949-3200
www.baysidewatersports.com

BLACK PRINCESS CHARTER
☎ 345-949-0400 or 3821
www.fishgrandcayman.com

CHARTERBOAT HEADQUARTERS
☎ 345-945-4340

BEST VALUE CHARTERS
☎ 345-949-1603

CAPT. CROSBY'S/C&G WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-947-4049

CAPTAIN GLEASON EBANKS
☎ 345-916-1502 or 945-2666

CAPTAIN MARVIN'S WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-947-4590
www.captainmarvins.com

CAYMAN DELIGHT CRUISES
☎ 345-949-8111
www.caymandelightcruises.com

DALLAS EBANKS WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-949-1538 or 9162707

ERNIE EBANKS WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-949-1538

FANTASEA TOURS
☎ 345-949-2182

FRANK'S WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-947-5491

JACKIE'S WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-947-5791

OH BOY CHARTERS
☎ 345-949-6341

STINGRAY CITY CHARTERS
☎ 345-949-9200

Conching Dives

Bayside Watersports (☎ 345-949-1750) offers a full-day package from 9 am to 3 pm for US $62.50. The package includes free transport and use of snorkel gear. Guests dive for conch (a six- to eight-foot dive), snorkel at Stingray City and the Coral Gardens, then enjoy a fresh fish lunch at Kaibo Beach

near Rum Point. This trip is not offered daily so prior arrangements are necessary.

NORTH SOUND BEACH

To learn more about Caymanian life, a North Sound Beach lunch and snorkeling trip is offered by several operators. Trips include snorkeling at either **Stingray City** or the **Sandbar** (depending on visibility and water conditions) and the **Coral Gardens**, plus lunch Cayman-style. The crew dives for pink queen conch, a shellfish that's then prepared as an appetizer, sliced and marinated in lime juice, onion and seasonings like ceviche. Everyone goes on shore at Cayman Kai for a Caymanian lunch of peas and rice, potato or breadfruit salad, and local fish or spicy chicken. Part of the fun is talking with the captain and crew about Caymanian life. These trips cost $50 per person and run from 9 am to 3 or 4 pm.

Underwater Photography

CATHY CHURCH'S UNDERWATER PHOTO CENTRE

South Church Street, Sunset House, George Town
☎ 345-949-7415, fax 345-949-9770
www.cathychurch.com
cathy@cathychurch.com

With its clear waters, bountiful marine life, and docile rays at Stingray City, Grand Cayman draws many beginning and advanced underwater photographers. "Considering the ease of travel from the US, the abundance of friendly fish and photogenic walls, photo-friendly boats, and calm, warm, clear

water, the Cayman Islands is the best photo destination in the Caribbean," says Cathy Church.

The center offers an array of underwater photo classes aimed at all levels of photographers. The most extensive offering is the **Cathy Church Super Course**, an eight-day class. Church has taught the course for over 25 years and limits the class size to only 14 students per session.

Students stay at Sunset House (☎ 888-854-4767, www.sunsethouse.com), a 59-room hotel near George Town. The fee includes tuition, three dinners, three lunches, use of Nikonos and Sea & Sea lenses, and more. The class can also be taken by travelers staying elsewhere on the island. For those interested in a shorter course, instructors at Cathy Church's Photo Centre offer a half-day class, which includes about 90 minutes of classroom instruction followed by a shore dive. Morning classes can be arranged for two or more students; this class now covers digital photography, as well as traditional film. The half-day class is commissionable to travel agents at 15% for groups of four or more taking the same type of class together.

Other options include snorkel photo classes for families, snorkel photo classes for other types of travelers, and digital classes. Also, private classes with Cathy Church are available for any level of photographer. When Church is not in Cayman, private tutoring is available with one of the center's instructors.

FISHEYE OF CAYMAN
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4209, fax 345-945-4208
www.fisheye.com
fisheye@candw.ky

In operation over 15 years, "We cater to small groups of divers on our boats so you won't be diving in a crowd," explains Fisheye's Rebecca Clarke. "Seasoned veterans and new divers are given the care that they need so that everyone has the best time possible. We even set up your gear and switch tanks between dives so that you can relax and enjoy your vacation."

Fisheye offers several services, from instruction to rentals. "We offer instruction and rentals of Nikonos, Sea & Sea, and underwater video equipment. Our award-winning set of three Nikonos instructional video tapes, produced by Martin Sutton and Susan Abbott, are available here in the shop and by mail-order," notes Clarke. "Every Nikonos underwater student we teach watches these tapes as part of our high-quality photography course. Our guests are invited to take along one of our easy-to-use Sea & Sea underwater cameras for just the cost of a roll of film. We also sell Nikonos, Sea & Sea, and Ikelite underwater photo equipment."

Along with rentals, Fisheye of Cayman offers a variety of photo classes, starting with "Intro to Underwater Photography," a class available any day of the year. The class begins with a two-hour lecture covering equipment and basic techniques; students then take a one-tank boat dive to shoot a roll of film. After processing, a critique session follows. The class includes all equipment and a roll of either slide or print film without processing. For more advanced students, the Underwater Photo Certification Class

is available; this class includes a two-tank dive and certification as a PADI underwater photographer.

For more serious underwater photographers, the "Underwater Photo Master Class" covers basic instruction in macro and wide angle photography. The class includes six boat dives, three rolls of film, and use of photo equipment; PADI certification as an Underwater Photographer is also included.

Travelers who would like instruction in particular areas can select the "Suit Yourself Class." The class includes a one-tank boat dive and can be customized to a client's needs, whether that's learning about camera housing, specific photography techniques, or composition.

At Fisheye of Cayman, photo courses that are reserved and paid for in advance by a travel agent are commissionable to the agent at a rate of 10%. Full payment is required 30 days prior to arrival. No refunds are offered for cancellations received less than 30 days prior to arrival, and since no refunds are offered for diving lost due to inclement weather, "we strongly suggest that clients purchase trip insurance," says Clarke.

Sailing

Sailing excursions are another popular way to enjoy the islands. Charters, sunset cruises, booze cruises, and rollicking "pirate" cruises are offered to entertain vacationers, especially on Grand Cayman. Do-it-yourselfers will find plenty of smaller watercraft: ocean kayaks, Sunfish, Hobie cats, WaveRunners, and more on Grand Cayman. Rental prices vary by location, but expect to pay anywhere from US $25 to $100 an hour, depending on type of vessel. Catamaran rentals run about $35-$40 per hour.

TIP

Want to learn to sail? Contact the **Cayman Islands Sailing Club**, PO Box 30513 SMB, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands BWI; ☎ 345-947-7913, fax 345-9474383. This sailing club offers classes for all ages.

SAILBOAT RENTALS

- Cayman Islands Sailing Club
  ☎ 345-947-7913
- Cayman Windsurfing
  Sailboats and catamarans
  ☎ 345-947-7492
- Red Sail Sports
  Sailboats and catamarans
  ☎ 877-RED-SAIL, 345-945-5965
  www.redsail.com

Pirate Cruise

For a look at the waters off George Town aboard an authentic replica of a 17th-century Spanish galleon, join a cruise aboard the *Jolly Roger* (☎ 345-949-8534). The ship has three masts and 110 pieces of rigging and is thought to be about the size of Columbus' *Niña*. Cruises vary from the afternoon family-friendly pirate cruise to the romantic sunset sail. The pirate cruise takes travelers on a two-hour sail along the coast of Grand Cayman, complete with staff in period dress to recall Cayman's pirate past. Kids love the cruise for the chance to literally walk the plank, fire the cannon or hoist the mainsail. Be

sure to bring your swimsuit for a snorkel stop along the way.

For something a little more sedate, sunset cruises offer a two-and-a-half hour view of the Caribbean sunset, complete with appetizers and drinks (options include appetizers only or a full dinner).

For more information about sunset and evening cruises, see the *After Dark* section (page 193).

Windsurfing

Windsurfing is enjoyed on Seven Mile Beach and on Grand Cayman's East End. The latter is a top windsurfing area for experienced participants because of its stronger winds. Trade winds of 15 to 25 knots blow during the winter months, dropping to 10 to 15 knots in the summer.

Windsurfers find plenty of action inside the reef, while others choose to go out through the channel (be cautious of sharp coral when going through the channel). Collier's Channel is a good point to take the waves.

Based at Morritt's Tortuga Club, **Cayman Windsurf** caters to both beginner and advanced windsurfers. Learn the sport, improve your knowledge, or just rent a craft and enjoy slicing through the water with the breeze. Beginners have four miles of reef-protected calm waters in which to learn, and advanced practitioners can sail out through Collier's Channel. Prices average about US $35 for one-hour rentals; lessons run about US $45. For more details, call Cayman Windsurf, ☎ 345-947-7492 or fax 345-947-6763.

Yachting

Cayman doesn't have the boating reputation of islands such as the British Virgin Islands, Antigua, the Grenadines, or Sint Maarten. There's no easy island-hopping here to appeal to beginners. Nonetheless, you'll find two marinas in Grand Cayman.

CAYMAN ISLANDS YACHT CLUB
PO Box 30985 SMB
Grand Cayman
☎ 345-945-4322, fax 345-945-4432
ciyc@candw.ky

HARBOUR HOUSE MARINA
PO Box 10550 APO, Marina Dr.
Prospect Park, GC
☎ 345-947-1307

Beaches

Seven Mile Beach

At just 5½ miles long, Seven Mile Beach may be somewhat of a misnomer, but in some ways the strip of sand seems much longer because of the numerous businesses packed along its expanse. This beautiful swath of white sand separates hotels, condominiums, and restaurants from an aquamarine sea. Dotted with casuarina trees, this beach is the most popular spot on the island. Come here to watch and be watched, to enjoy an island concoction or to slather on oil and bake yourself into tropical bliss. Watersports operators line the way, offering active vacationers anything from scuba trips and parasailing to windsurfing and Jet Skiing.

Seven Mile Beach runs along Grand Cayman's western edge, beginning at George Town and stretching to a region called West Bay at its northern end. Along Seven Mile Beach, Grand Cayman narrows to

a skinny stretch about a mile wide, bordered by the beach on the west and North Sound to the east. On its eastern boundary the sea etches into the land with salt creeks and marsh harbors. Much of these eastern reaches are covered with swampy vegetation.

Along Seven Mile Beach you'll find a public beach park tucked north of the Westin Casuarina Hotel. With plenty of parking (other beach access areas offer parking on the shoulder of busy West Bay Road), this is one of the best options for enjoying Seven Mile Beach if you're not staying at one of the area properties. The park includes shaded pavilions, restrooms with changing rooms, and a small playground for the kids. Squeaky clean and, like the rest of the island, devoid of beach vendors, the park is a wonderful place to spend an afternoon.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

Nude bathing is prohibited in the Cayman Islands, and beaches require tops for female bathers.

Spotts

Located east of George Town on the south shore of Grand Cayman, Spotts is home to a public beach park with a shallow swimming area.

Breakers

The community of Breakers, about halfway between Spotts and East End, is home to another public beach park.

Rum Point

Rum Point is on the north coast of Grand Cayman's East End, on the tip of a peninsula that's home to ca-

suarina trees, chalky sand, aquamarine waters, and a club with just about every watersport imaginable. This getaway spot now has restaurants, a gift shop, walkways and hammocks, and other amenities for a relaxing and pleasant visit.

You can get to Rum Point by car (about an hour's drive from George Town, as you have to circle almost the entire island) or on the *Rum Pointer* ferry, which departs from the Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman. This 120-passenger ferry travels across the North Sound to Rum Point in about 30 minutes. Tickets are CI $6 each way; for children aged five-12 they are CI $3 each way (children under age five travel free). For ferry schedule and reservations, ☎ 345-949-9098.

Fishing

Fishing is more than just a popular activity in Cayman, it's a national obsession. Shore, reef, and deep-sea fishing are available year-round, and local guides can provide tackle and point out the best fishing spots on each island.

Bonefishing is a top activity. These three- to eight-pound fish are found in shallow flats and afford any angler a good fight on spinning gear. **Reef fishing** is also enjoyed along the many miles of reefs that surround these islands.

Fly-fishing continues to grow in popularity here but anglers should bring all their equipment, as guides and charters do not supply saltwater fly rods.

For travelers seeking **deep-water** action, charters will gladly take them on a hunt for **blue marlin**, **yellowfin tuna**, **wahoo**, **dolphin** (dorado) and **barracuda**. Taking out a charter boat is not an inexpensive proposition, but for many visitors it's the highlight of their trip. A half-day charter begins at about US $400; the cost may go as high as $1,000 for a full-day trip aboard a large charter with state-of-the art equipment and tackle.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

The Cayman Islands government encourages the practice of catch-and-release for blue marlin to help maintain this species in its waters; they give free citations to anglers who release their marlin. A form can be obtained from the boat's captain or the charter boat booking office to request this citation.

Fishing Charter Operators

BAYSIDE WATERSPORTS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-3200, www.baysidewatersports.com

BLACK PRINCESS CHARTERS
Seven Mile Beach,
☎ 345-949-0400/3821, www.fishgrandcayman.com

BURTON'S TOURIST INFORMATION
AND ACTIVITY SERVICES
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-6598
aatours@candw.ky, www.aacaymanislands.com

CAPT. ASLEY'S WATERSPORTS
George Town
☎ 345-949-3054
cayfish@candw.ky

CAPT. RONALD EBANKS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-3146
www.flyfishgrandcayman.com

ISLAND GIRL CHARTERS
George Town
☎ 345-947-3029
islgirl@candw.ky

JUST FISH'N
Hyatt Canal, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-916-0113, www.justfish.com.ky

PEACEMAKER CHARTERS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-947-8548
peace@candw.ky

SEA STAR CHARTERS
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-1016

Parasailing

Parasailing is a way to get a true bird's-eye view of Seven Mile Beach as you float 400 feet above the beach. Arrange an excursion through one of these local watersports operators.

ABANK'S WATERSPORTS & TOURS LTD.
☎ 345-945-1444

AQUA DELIGHTS
☎ 345-945-4786

BOB SOTO'S DIVING LTD.
☎ 800-262-7686

CAYMAN SKYRIDERS
(Hyatt Regency and Westin Casuarina)
☎ 345-949-8745

KIRK SEA TOURS & WATERSPORTS
(Treasure Island Resort)
☎ 345-949-6986

PARASAILING PROFESSIONALS
☎ 345-916-2953

RED SAIL SPORTS
(Hyatt Regency, Westin Casuarina)
☎ 345-949-8745

Explore the Coral Reef By Submarine

ATLANTIS SUBMARINE & RESEARCH SUBMERSIBLE
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 800-887-8571, 800-253-0493, 345-949-7700
www.atlantisadventures.com
Call for schedule
Admission: varies according to length and type of dive; see website for details

If you're curious about what lies below the water's surface, the 48-passenger *Atlantis* submarine is the perfect way to have a peek at Grand Cayman's underwater world. Swimmers and non-swimmers alike enjoy safe, air-conditioned, comfortable travel to 100 feet below the surface aboard the *Atlantis* with a narrated view of coral gardens, sponge gardens, the undersea wall, and more.

Another option is a ride on one of two *Atlantis* research submersibles, also operating from the Atlantis office on Harbour Drive. Plunging as much as 1,000 feet below the surface, this vessel offers a one-of-a-kind experience. The 22-foot sub, the only vessel of its type open to the public, carries two passengers and a pilot. Several times a day, it dives down the Cayman Wall to depths far beyond the range of sports scuba divers. Passengers sit side-by-side in front of a large (three-foot diameter) convex viewport. The view varies with the depth: from 200 to 400 feet are colorful sponges and corals in what is termed the "sponge belt." Hundreds of sponges blanket the vertical wall in forms ranging from 20-foot-

long orange rope sponges to gigantic barrel sponges. From 650 to 1,000 feet, living formations give way to limestone pinnacles that house deep-sea creatures such as stalked crinoids, porcelain corals and glass sponges. The limestone blocks, or "haystacks," stand over 150 feet tall. Here light no longer penetrates the sea and the research sub illuminates the inky blackness with powerful lights. The highlight of many trips is a visit to the *Kirk Pride*, a shipwreck that sits on a ledge at 800 feet. This 180-foot freighter sank in a storm in 1976 and its fate was unknown until the wreck was discovered by an *Atlantis* research submarine in 1985. Five dives daily, Monday through Friday. Advance reservations are strongly recommended for this limited-availability adventure. Be warned that it's a pricey one-hour excursion (starting at $345) but certainly a unique one.

UNDER THE DEEP BLUE SEA

Tours operate six days a week; visitors buy tickets at the *Atlantis* headquarters on Harbour Drive in downtown George Town, just south of the cruise ship terminal. You'll board an open-air boat and travel out to the dive site just off George Town's shore. Bench seating runs the length of the sub and all passengers have a porthole from which to enjoy the underwater scene.

After viewing the marine life, don't be surprised to see some human life forms approaching the submarine – these are the *Atlantis* divers. Wearing armored wetsuits to protect against fish nibbles, they feed clouds of hungry fish and provide good photo opportunities.

TIP

If you bring your camera on a dive vessel, load ASA 1000 film so you will not need a flash; it will reflect off the portholes.

NAUTILUS UNDERSEA TOUR
North Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-945-1355
www.nautilus.ky
Hours: daily; call for tour times
Admission: varies depending on length and type of trip; see website for details

The *Nautilus* offers a one-hour tour to view the rich marine life of the bay. The vessel does not submerge; travelers sit in a glass hull six feet beneath the surface and can go up on deck anytime during the trip, making it attractive for families with young children. The *Nautilus* goes out about three-quarters of a mile offshore, offering visitors a chance to view two shipwrecks and see a variety of tropical fish. Night cruises, sunset dinner cruises, and mystery theater cruises are also available. The *Nautilus* also offers the two-hour **Captain Nemo's Adventure Tour**, which begins with the one-hour undersea trip. The vessel then moors over a wreck or reef and visitors can walk about above or below deck, swim or snorkel.

ATLANTIS SEAWORLD EXPLORER
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-8534
www.atlantisadventures.com
Hours: daily; call for tour times
Admission: $32 adults, $16 children ages four to 12

Actually a glorified glass-bottom boat, the *Seaworld Explorer*, like the *Nautilus*, is a good option for those who might feel a little claustrophobic about a submarine adventure (it does not go below the water's surface). Visitors descend into a glass observatory and view marine life and two shipwrecks. The *Explorer* travels to the *Cali*, a schooner that hit the reef in 1944, and the *Balboa*, a freighter from Cuba destroyed by a hurricane. Today the wrecks are encased in corals and filled with fish life. Trips last one hour; the *Seaworld Explorer* is next to the *Atlantis* headquarters on South Church Street.

SEAmagine
☎ 877-252-6262 or 345-916-DIVE
**Admission?

This is one of the most unusual tours in the Cayman Islands, sort of a private submarine that you can even get the chance to maneuver. The *SEAmagine* takes two passengers in a glass bubble of a cabin while the pilot is on the *outside* of the cabin in scuba gear. You'll be in communication with the pilot at all times as he points out fish on the 40-foot-deep reef. The tour takes about an hour to complete; you'll need to make reservations to arrange for pick up along Seven Mile Beach.

On Land

Sports & Recreation

Birding

One of the most popular eco-tourism activities in these islands is birding. Approximately 200 species of birds make their home on these small islands (50 species are known to breed here), from the magnificent frigate bird, with a seven-foot wingspan, to tiny hummingbirds and Cayman parrots.

The only operation of its kind on Grand Cayman, **Silver Thatch Excursions** (☎ 345-945-6588, fax 345-949-3342, silvert@hotmail.com) offers specialized birding trips for about US $50 per person. These trips visit sites such as the **Governor Michael Gore Bird Sanctuary**, a haven for waterfowl, as well as **Meagre Bay Pond**, **Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park**, and the **Willie Ebanks Farm** to view endangered West Indian whistling ducks. Founders Geddes and Janet Hislop also offer private tours.

Golf

Golfers are challenged at two courses on Grand Cayman. **The Links at SafeHaven** is the only championship 18-hole golf course in the Cayman Islands. At the Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman, the Jack Nicklaus-designed **Britannia** course can be played as an 18-hole executive course, a nine-hole championship course, or an 18-hole Cayman ball course (the Cayman ball is designed to go only half as far as a regular ball).

BRITANNIA COURSE

Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-8020, fax 345-945-3406

This Jack Nicklaus-designed course can be played as a nine-hole championship course, an 18-hole executive course, or an 18-hole Cayman ball course. What's a Cayman ball course? Well, this is the first one in the world. Designed to go only half as far as a regular ball, the Cayman ball makes the best use of the small course area on the island. This links-style course, with the challenges of its seaside location, includes blind tee shots, pot bunkers, and two-tiered greens. On the fifth hole, golfers shoot over the Caribbean waters.

THE LINKS AT SAFEHAVEN

Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-5988, fax 345-949-5457
www.safehaven.ky

This is the only championship 18-hole golf course in the Cayman Islands. Men are required to wear shirts with collar and sleeves; women must wear a shirt to cover shoulders. Golf carts are mandatory and operators must be at least 17 years old and have a valid drivers license. Services at the course include a golf pro for lessons, golf shop, putting greens, chipping and bunker practice areas, aqua driving range, open-air patio bar, and The Links Restaurant for lunch and dinner (see *Best Places To Eat*, page 222).

RITZ-CARLTON GRAND CAYMAN

The Ritz-Carlton Grand Cayman is adding a nine hole, Greg Norman-designed course; call ☎ 800-241-3333 or see www.ritzcarlton.com for an update on the status of this new course.

SUNRISE FAMILY GOLF CENTRE
Hirst Road (East End; turn north on Hirst Road in Savannah and continue to signs)
☎ 345-947-GOLF, fax 345-946-0508
Sunrise1@candw.ky

This par three course is a favorite with families. It includes a clubhouse with a pro shop, putting green and a driving range. Clubs and pull carts are available for rent.

Horseback Riding

Horseback riding is an excellent opportunity both to tour some of the island's quieter sections and to romp along the beach. Most horseback riding on the island is along the powdery beaches, an excellent place for practiced riders to gallop and for beginners to enjoy a slow walk on cushioned sand (a comfort to those who feel they may fall off).

Rides vary, but most run an hour and 15 minutes on the beach, through the water, along a short trail and back down the beach. Although shorts can be worn, jeans and closed shoes are recommended.

NICKI'S PRIVATE BEACH RIDES
☎ 345-916-3530 or 945-5839

PAMPERED PONIES
☎ 345-945-2262 or 916-2540, www.ponies.ky

Pampered Ponies can accommodate experienced or non-experienced riders and children.

Tennis

Courts are found at most major hotels and condominium complexes. Many are lighted for night play.

Tours & Excursions

History & Nature

SILVER THATCH EXCURSIONS
Box 344 WB
Town Hall Crescent, West Bay
☎ 345-945-6588
Admission

Two historic tours are offered by Silver Thatch Excursions. The **Eastern Experience** takes travelers to the island's East End to view a variety of sites, including the Wreck of the Ten Sails Monument, which recalls the seafaring days of the Cayman Islands. The tour also stops at Old Prospect, the location of the island's first fort, and Watler's Cemetery. In Bodden Town, participants go on a walking tour to see early Caymanian architecture and then travel on to the Blow Holes at Breakers.

A second tour starts in the **West Bay** area, with a stop at Old Homestead to learn more about early Cayman life. Travelers then head to George Town for a walking tour of the capital city. This includes a visit to the site of Fort George and the Elmslie Memorial Church, built by a shipwright with a ceiling constructed to resemble a schooner's hull. The tour continues on to Old Prospect and the Old Savannah Schoolhouse. Both historic tours are available Monday through Saturday.

The cemetery adjacent to the Elmslie Memorial Church has grave markers that resemble houses, a typical island style.

Those with an interest in botany can select from two specialized excursions that include the **Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park**. One tour follows the Historic Route, traveling from the Old Savannah Schoolhouse, to Bodden Town to see the Slave Wall and Cayman-style homes, and then to the Botanic Park for a walk along the Woodland Trail. The second tour

follows the Environmental Route; it includes bird-watching stops at the **Governor Michael Gore Bird Sanctuary** and other birding sites and then a tour of the Botanic Park. Excursions are offered Monday through Saturday.

Silver Thatch Excursions also offers bird-watching trips. These include stops at the Governor Michael Gore Bird Sanctuary, a haven for waterfowl, as well as Meagre Bay Pond, Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park, and the Willie Ebanks Farm to view endangered West Indian whistling ducks.

Pick up can be arranged along West Bay Road starting at 8 am (6 am for bird watching trips) for all Silver Thatch tours. Participants are provided with traditional Caymanian snacks.

MASTIC TRAIL
Cayman National Trust
☎ 345-949-0445 or 949-5688
Admission

The Mastic Trail is a project of the National Trust. Guided tours travel through a woodland area along a two-mile trail. One of the most interesting areas is a region filled with fine red soil called "red mold." The dirt contains minerals found in the ancient rocks of Africa and scientists believe that, through the years, the dust from the Sahara Desert blew across the Atlantic and the Caribbean to accumulate here. Birders have a chance to sight the Grand Cayman parrot, Caribbean dove, West Indian woodpecker, Cuban bullfinch, smooth-billed ani, and the colorful bananaquit.

The hike also passes 100 different types of trees, including black mangroves that grow from the brackish water, elegant royal palms, and tall mahogany trees. Fruit trees, first planted by early residents, include mango, tamarind, and calabash. Orchids

bring color to the trees during the spring season, probably the best time of year to experience this ecotourism attraction.

> ★ TIP
>
> Wear sturdy shoes and bring insect repellent. The Mastic Trail tour is not recommended for children under six, for the elderly or those with physical disabilities.

Self-Guided Tours

CAYMAN NATIONAL TRUST
Trust House
Courts Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-0445 or 949-5688
Free ($1 for brochures)

The Trust has created walking tour brochures for its most historic districts: **West Bay**, **George Town**, and **Bodden Town**. These brochures (available for $1 from the National Museum or the National Trust office) introduce visitors to Caymanian history and architecture and are a wonderful way to learn more about the history that makes these islands special.

Sightseeing

QUEEN ELIZABETH II BOTANIC PARK
Frank Sound Road, East End
Hours: 9 am to 6:30 pm daily
☎ 345-947-3558
www.botanic-park.ky
Admission

This is one of the best attractions on Grand Cayman, both economically and educationally. About 25 min-

utes' drive from George Town, the park comprises 65 acres filled with native trees, plants, and wild orchids, as well as birds, reptiles, and butterflies. The two-story **Visitors Centre**, built in traditional Caymanian style, includes displays on natural history and botanical art, and small flower shows. Behind the center, a waterfall leads to a snack bar that serves sandwiches, patties, ice cream and juices.

Visit the park's **Heritage Garden** for a look at Cayman history. It features a Caymanian house from the East End; this home has been restored and filled with donated furniture. The three-room structure was once a family home where nine children were raised. Today the yard is filled with the plants and fruit trees that a typical Caymanian family would have grown, such as cassava, sugarcane, plantains, bananas, and sweet potatoes. A cistern collects valuable rainwater and a separated kitchen keeps the heat of the stove (and the hazard of fire) from the house. In small open areas in the surrounding lowland forest, fruit trees grow in pockets of soil among the ironshore, much as they would have generations ago. Medicinal plants such as aloe vera, commonly grown around a Caymanian house, are found here as well.

The **Floral Colour Garden** is the most traditional botanical garden area here, with 2½ acres of floral gardens arranged by color. Pink, purple, orange, silver, and a whole rainbow of tones blossom with color and fragrance year-round. Up high, overlooking the gardens and a small pond that features six-foot Victoria water lilies, a tea house has been constructed.

The **Woodland Trail**, just under a mile long, is a must-see for anyone interested in Cayman plants. Budget at least a half-hour for the walk, longer if possible, so you'll have time to read the informative exhibits, stop and listen for the call of a Cayman par-

rot in the trees, and look for turtles in the swampy undergrowth. The trail winds through several types of environments. One of the wettest is a buttonwood swamp, filled with its namesake, one of the few trees that can live with its roots continually submerged. The swamp provides humidity for bromeliads and orchids. On the other end of the spectrum, a cactus exhibit illustrates the drier regions of the Cayman Islands, and it's home to large century plants (agave) and cacti. One habitat is similar to that found on Little Cayman and includes flora that grow on the tiny Sister Island.

Watch the shadowy undergrowth and you may spot one of Grand Cayman's shyest residents, the agouti. Other wildlife in the park include the hickatee, a turtle found in the freshwater and brackish ponds of the Cayman Islands and Cuba. The Grand Cayman blue iguana or the Cayman anole lizard with a blue throat pouch are also seen.

CAYMAN HOUSING

Traditional Caymanian houses, like the one at the botanic garden, feature sand gardens. Raked clean, the sand gardens were often trimmed with conch shells and have paths paved with coral. On Christmas Eve, families would replenish the sand in their yard with fresh sand from the beach. No one really knows how the tradition got started but some suspect that, for the early Scottish residents, the fresh white sand reminded them of snow.

RUM POINT
Hours: daily
Ferry tickets are CI $6 each way; for children aged five-12 they are CI $3 each way (no charge for children under age five); use of the beach is free.
☎ 345-949-9098 (ferry)

Wonder what Seven Mile Beach might have looked like before all the condos and hotels? Then maybe it's time for a day-trip over to Rum Point, a beautiful stretch of beach that's a fun alternative to Seven Mile Beach. Rum Point is across the North Sound from the bustling West Bay-Seven Mile Beach area. It is dotted with casuarina trees, chalky sand, aquamarine waters, and a club with just about every watersport. Recently over $5 million in improvements were made to this getaway spot, which now sports a full-service dinner restaurant, casual lunch eatery and bar, decks and walkways, plenty of comfy hammocks and picnic tables, a gift shop, and more.

You can get to Rum Point by car (about an hour's drive from George Town) or on the *Rum Pointer* ferry, which departs from the Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman. This 120-passenger ferry travels to Rum Point in about 30 minutes. If you're at Rum Point at dusk, don't miss the fish feeding off the docks.

CAYMAN TURTLE FARM
West Bay
Hours: 9 am to 5 pm daily
☎ 345-949-3893 or 949-3894
Admission

Named for the color of their fat, some green sea turtles reach 700 pounds.

Along with Stingray City, the Cayman Turtle Farm is one of the island's top attractions. It's the only farm of its kind in the world and for over 30 years this site has offered visitors the chance to get up close and personal with green sea turtles. Allow about 45 minutes to tour the farm.

The farm displays the life cycle of the green sea turtle from birth through the breeding stage. Eggs, which are laid by the big breeder turtles on a sand beach at the farm, are incubated in the nursery. The hatchlings live in tanks and are fed a high-protein pelleted diet similar in appearance to dog food. This accounts for the rapid growth of the farm's turtles compared to their relatives in the wild.

The self-guided tour of the turtle farm takes you past many tanks filled with turtles in various life stages. A special tank contains turtles that you may pick up and hold, an excellent photo opportunity. Reach down and clutch the turtle's body just behind his front flippers. He'll flip and flap around, trying to swim away in mid-air, unless you hold him vertically.

The turtle farm also recognizes the land residents of the Cayman Islands in several exhibit areas. Look for the **agouti** or the Cayman "rabbit" in one area. These rodents, found in the eastern districts of Grand Cayman, have long, thin legs and hoof-like claws, with three toes on their hind feet and five toes on the forefeet. Once a food source, today the rodents are rarely spotted. Nearby, another area houses a display of the **American crocodile**. Early records speak of sightings of this 20-foot crocodile in Grand Cayman and Little Cayman; recent archaeological finds have proven this claim to be true. The last stop on the tour is the extensive gift shop. You might be shocked to see turtle steak and turtle shells for sale in the shop. Remember, however, that this is a working farm. Many turtles are released into the sea every year, although others find their way onto Cayman dinner tables. The turtle plays a role in the Cayman diet and culture much like the turkey in the United States. Much of the turtle meat served at local restaurants comes from the Cayman Turtle

Farm. The farm defends its efforts and points out that by providing turtle meat – a longtime Caymanian favorite – to the local market, it diminishes the need for turtle hunting. Also, the survival rate at the farm is much higher than in the wild (here, nine out of every 10 turtles survive, as compared to one out of 10 in the sea).

WARNING!

Remember, you cannot bring turtle products of any kind through US Customs. They will be confiscated.

The Cayman Turtle Farm was hit by Hurricane Michelle in 2001, destroying several of the larger tanks. Today the farm is working to create a new and larger attraction just across the street, moving the turtles farther from the sea to a more secure location. Plans call for an extensive attraction that will give visitors the opportunity to swim with turtles. They expect the project to be completed in 2004.

HELL
West Bay

Ready to go to Hell? Well, here it is, just north of Seven Mile Beach. This odd attraction is actually a community named Hell, a moniker derived from the time an English commissioner went hunting in the area, shot at a bird, missed, and said "Oh, hell." The name must have seemed appropriate for the devilishly pointed rocks near town, a bed of limestone and dolomite that through millions of years eroded into a crusty, pocked formation locally called ironshore.

To reach this small community, follow **West Bay Road** north from Seven Mile Beach. At the intersec-

tion with **Town Hall Road**, turn right and continue to **Hell Road**. Turn left to this small town.

Today, Hell trades upon its unusual name as a way to draw tourists to the far end of West Bay. Visitors stop at the **post office** (and the three shops directly adjacent) to buy postcards and have them postmarked from Hell. Nearby, **The Devil's Hangout** gift shop (open daily), in the original post office, also ships out its share of postcards. The store is manned by Ivan Farrington. He dresses as the devil himself to greet tourists who arrive to purchase postcards and other Hell-related gifts, from hot sauces to T-shirts. Step out back behind the shops for a look at the unusual rock formations that gave this community its name.

And, yes, you'll find churches in Hell. Save a few minutes for a look around this quiet, charming community.

PEDRO ST. JAMES
Savannah
Hours: 9 am to 5 pm daily
☎ 345-947-3329
www.pedrostjames.ky
Admission

One of the East End's newest attractions is also its oldest. Pedro St. James Restoration Site, an 18th-century great house, has undergone complete renovation and today the building known as the "Birthplace of Democracy in the Cayman Islands" is open to the public. Called **Pedro Castle**, the historic structure is in the community of Savannah, east of George Town.

The oldest-known stone structure in the Cayman Islands, Pedro Castle was built in the late 18th century as a great house for William Eden, an early settler. In 1831, the house was the site of an historic

meeting when residents decided that the five districts of the Cayman Islands should have representation in the government. Four years later, a proclamation declaring the emancipation of all slaves was read at Pedro Castle and several other sites in the islands.

The site, purchased by the government in 1991, is at the center of a 7.65-acre landscaped park atop the 30-foot Great Pedro Bluff. The CI $7.5 (about US $6. 25) million project was a major undertaking, taking seven years to complete. The restoration used architectural and historic research to return the house to its 1820-1840 appearance.

Tours start with an excellent multi-media show with 3-D dioramas, providing a history of the house that captivates children and adults alike. From the show, visitors can take a self-guided tour of the house then walk the grounds, which boast several extensive walking paths, a variety of native plants, and beautiful sea views.

We have visited Pedro St. James several times and each time come away with some new knowledge. The operation is very well done and this attraction is highly recommended, especially for visitors who are making their second trip to the Cayman Islands and would like to learn more about the island's history.

CAYMAN ISLANDS NATIONAL MUSEUM
Harbour Drive, George Town
Hours: Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm; Saturday, 10 am to 2 pm
☎ 345-949-8368
www.museum.ky
Admission

The Cayman Islands National Museum is, in our opinion, one of the finest museums in the Caribbean. A visit here is a great way to learn more about

Cayman history and culture. Over the years this seaside building, just across from the cruise ship terminals, has served as a courthouse, jail, and meeting hall, and today it houses over 2,000 artifacts that recall the history of these islands. Created in 1979 by a museum law and opened in 1990, the museum collects items of historic, scientific, and artistic relevance.

You'll enter on the ground floor. Begin your visit with an eight-minute slide show about the history of these islands. From there, enjoy a self-guided tour of the museum, with displays on all facets of Caymanian life. A bathymetric map illustrates the depth of the seas around the Cayman Islands, including the Cayman Trench at 23,750 feet below sea level. Other exhibits focus on the islands' natural history, including mangrove swamps, which create a rich birding environment; caymanite, a semi-precious stone unique to the Cayman islands; and displays on local marine life.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

This museum is housed in the **Old Courts Building**, one of the few 19th-century structures left on the island. Outdoor steps lead up to the second story of the building and those 12 steps gave rise to a Cayman saying, "walking the 12 steps," which meant you were being taken to court.

Some of the most fascinating displays recall the early economy of the Caymanians. An oral history program reveals the history of early turtlers who made a living capturing the now-protected reptiles. Exhibits display artifacts used by the early resi-

dents such as the muntle, a club used to kill fish; the calabash, a versatile gourd that, once dried, had many uses; sisal switches used to beat mosquitoes away; and wompers, sandals worn on the East End, originally made from leather and later from old tires.

After your tour you'll exit through the museum shop, a good source of Cayman-made items. The shop, housed in the old jail with part of the old coral stone wall still exposed, has a good selection of books and maps of the Cayman Islands. (If you don't have time for a museum tour, you can enter through the store for a little shopping.)

CARDINAL D'S PARK

Off Courts Road, George Town
Hours: daily; tours at 11 am and 2 pm
☎ 345-949-8855
Admission

This park contains a small zoo that is a good stop for families. Over 60 species of exotic birds (including Cayman parrots and whistling ducks), as well as agoutis, emus, blue iguanas, turtles, miniature ponies, and more are on display. A petting zoo and snack bar make this attraction popular with kids.

MASTIC TRAIL

Cayman National Trust
☎ 345-949-0445 or 949-5688
ntrust@candw.ky
Hours: 10 am to 3 pm
Admission

The Mastic Trail walk is not recommended for children under age six, the elderly, or those with physical disabilities.

For over two centuries man has walked the Mastic Trail, which winds for two miles through swamps, woodlands, and farming areas. Originally used to herd cattle to the south coast, today the trail is maintained by the National Trust for the Cayman

Islands and is an excellent way for travelers to learn more about the many types of fauna found here. Guided 2½-hour walks, led by local resident Albert Hines, travel past 100 different varieties of trees and 550 other plant species such as the wild banana orchid, the Cayman national flower. Only eight people are permitted on each of the tours; reservations are required. Hikers should wear sturdy shoes and bring insect repellent. Cold soft drinks and transportation back to the trailhead are provided.

BLOW HOLES

Between Frank Sound and East End

East of the turnoff for Frank Sound Road lies a side-of-the-road attraction: the Blow Holes. You'll access the blowholes from a free parking area just off the main road. Follow the wooden stairs down to sea level to see the rugged coral rocks that have been carved by rough waves into caverns. As waves hit the rocks, water spews into the air, creating one of the best photo sites on the island. The "blows" are strongest when the waves are large (and don't blow at all on the calmest days), shooting sprays of water 20 to 30 feet in the air.

WARNING!

Don't stand too close to the edge of these formations. Wear good shoes for this excursion; the ironshore is sharp and footing isn't solid.

PIRATE CAVES
Bodden Town
Hours: 9 am to 5 pm
☎ 345-947-3122
Admission

A less scenic and more touristy stop (but nonetheless fun) are the Pirate Caves in Bodden Town. Reputed to have been used by pirates to hide their treasure and supposedly linked by tunnels to similar caves in the reef, the cave is now open for self-guided tours. You'll first view a caged blue iguana and Cayman parrot, as well as a traditional Cayman cottage, then head underground for a look at the cave. Across the street, alleged pirate graves, actually carved by slaves from rock in the shape of small houses, await inspection.

STINGRAY BREWERY
Red Bay Road, past Prospect
☎ 345-947-6699
Free

This microbrewery produces the Stingray Beer sold throughout the islands and offers a self-guided tour of the brewing process. To reach the brewery, follow Crewe Road or South Sound Road to Red Bay Road, then continue east on Red Bay Road. You'll see the brewery on your right. Brewery hours are 9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Saturday; closed Sunday.

Spas

BRITTANIA BEAUTY SPA
Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman
☎ 800-233-1234
www.hyatt.com

This elegant resort is home to the island's first full-service spa. The spa, a two-story, 1,980-square-foot

facility, is staffed by European-trained therapists. There are several wet and dry treatment rooms, a Vichy shower, relaxation room, juice bar, and a pool. Guests can select from numerous treatments including reflexology, seaweed treatments, aromatherapy facials and massage, skin brushing, body exfoliating, Swedish massage, hydrotherapy and more. One of the most unusual treatments is the hydrotherapy tub, with 118 air jets and 59 water jets, designed to provide a penetrating massage without discomfort. Other specialty treatments include the Swiss steam shower cabin, a high-performance hydrotherapy system using steam and water jets. Each treatment room has a separate stereo system. The spa also offers the "Cuisine Naturelle" spa menu and all-natural juice drinks.

THE SPA
Grand Cayman Marriott Beach Resort
☎ 345-949-2892
www.marriotthotels.com

The Marriott offers spa services provided by The Spa with locations at each resort. Face, body, hair, and nail treatments are available for both guests and non-guests; all treatments utilize YonKa Paris holistic products. Some of the most popular treatments include the Sunrise, an aromatherapy steam followed by a facial; the Jet Lag Reviver, a massage and body treatment with exfoliation followed by a back, neck, and shoulder massage; and Serenity by the Sea, a seaside massage for two persons followed by a bottle of champagne.

HIBISCUS SPA

Westin Casuarina Resort
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-3800, fax 345-949-5825
Reservations: ☎ 800-228-3000
www.westin.com or www.westincasuarina.com

The Westin is home to the newest spa in the Cayman Islands, the $3 million Hibiscus Spa. The 7,000-square-foot, European-style spa has 12 treatment rooms, couples massage rooms, men's and ladies' steam rooms and whirlpools, seaside massage cabanas, manicure, pedicure, and facial treatment areas, and more.

THE HEALING TOUCH

Comfort Suites, Grand Cayman
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 800-517-4000
www.caymancomfort.com

The Healing Touch at Comfort Suites is a satellite office of the main facility at the Regency Court shopping center (☎ 345-949-2034). Limited spa facilities are available here, but with deep tissue, sports, and Swedish massage, as well as acupressure and body rolling, it is an especially popular choice for travelers with an eye on the budget.

BODY WORKS HOLISTIC WELLNESS CENTRE

Queen's Court Plaza on West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-6485

This day spa offers Swedish massage, shiatsu, sports massage, craniosacral therapy, reflexology, neuromuscular massage, and other treatments. The center offers an outcall service. The spa is staffed by licensed massage therapists.

SPA ESPRIT MASSAGE AND DAY SPA
The Falls Plaza on Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-4334
Pasadora Place on Smith Road
☎ 345-945-4331

With two locations on the island, Spa Esprit has both massage and beauty treatments. Each facility offers Swedish massage, aromatherapy, and reflexology, as well as deep tissue massage; they also provide an array of beauty treatments including facials.

SPA NOVELL
West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-1810

This day spa near the Marquee cinema complex offers several types of massage, including sports, prenatal, and neuromuscular. Skin and body treatments, as well as hair and nail treatments are also available.

In The Air

A Bird's-Eye View

ISLAND AIR
☎ 345-949-5252, fax 345-949-7044
www.islandair.ky

SEABORNE FLIGHTSEEING ADVENTURES
☎ 345-949-6029

Aerial tours of Grand Cayman are available through both Island Air and Seaborne. "It is a unique way to view the island," said Marcus Cumber, Seaborne's operations manager. "We fly at a low level altitude and it is possible to see the stingrays, turtles, and big fish from the sky. We feel that our guides are extremely knowledgeable of the Cayman Islands since

they are local residents. We can point out the best of the Islands and discuss their history." Tours are scheduled only from December through June; call Island Air or Seaborne for rates and schedules.

Day-Trips

If you are making a repeat visit to Grand Cayman or booking a week on the island, you may want to consider a day-trip to Cayman Brac or Little Cayman. Under an hour's flight northeast of Grand Cayman but worlds apart in terms of atmosphere, these small islands are tailor-made for travelers looking for bonefishing, secluded beaches, or nature appreciation.

Day-trips are easy thanks to frequent flights with **Island Air** (☎ 345-949-5252, fax 345-949-7044, www.islandair.ky). Four flights daily connect Grand Cayman with the Sister Islands, and special day-trip rates are available. Day-trippers can leave Grand Cayman at 7:45 or 9:45 am, landing on Cayman Brac 40 minutes later. After a quick stop, the flight continues to Little Cayman, just 10 minutes away. Return flights allow travelers to stay until early evening, arriving back on Grand Cayman as late as 6:20 pm.

Cayman Brac

With a population of only 1,300 residents, Cayman Brac is closer in pace to Little Cayman than its big brother, Grand Cayman. Residents, or *Brackers*, are known for their personable nature and welcome vacationers to their sunny isle.

Like its smaller sibling, Cayman Brac has its own special qualities, assets that include **undersea walls**, the most **rugged terrain** found in the Cay-

man Islands, **caves** that tempt exploration, **birding**, and much more.

The island is named for the sheer **bluff** that is visited by hikers and non-hikers alike. This area is a favorite for bird-watching, one of the most popular activities on Cayman Brac. Here the 180-acre **Parrot Reserve** is home to the endangered Cayman Brac parrot. Only 400 of the birds remain in the wild on this island.

Among Cayman Brac's most unusual features are its many caves. The bluff is pocked with caves that frame beautiful seaside views. Several of the 18 caves on Cayman Brac have been explored and five are frequently visited by vacationers. **Rebecca's Cave**, east of Divi Tiara Hotel, is marked with signs. The best known of the island's caves, sadly this one is named for a young child who died here during the Great Hurricane of 1932. **Skull Cave**, **Peter's Cave**, **Bat Cave**, and **Great Cave** present other caving challenges, some requiring steep climbs.

Without a doubt, **undersea life** is one of the island's prime attractions. The latest attraction is a Russian frigate deliberately sunk in September 1996. Renamed the MV *Captain Keith Tibbetts*, this 330-foot freighter was built for use by the Cuban navy. It lies approximately 200 yards offshore northwest of Cayman Brac. The bow rests in about 90 feet of water; the stern is just 40 feet below the surface. The sinking of the vessel was recorded by Jean-Michel Cousteau Productions in *Destroyer at Peace*, a documentary film.

For car rental agencies on Cayman Brac, see page 240.

Although day-trippers cannot dive because of the same-day return flight, several dive operators offer snorkel trips:

- **Brac Aquatics** (☎ 800-544-2722, 345-948-1429) offers trips specifically for snorkelers.

◆ **Divi Dive Tiara**, (☎ 800-661-DIVE, 345-948-1553) and **Reef Divers Brac Reef Beach Resort** (☎ 800-327-3835) allow snorkelers to come along on dive trips.

Bonefishing is another top draw for many Cayman Brac vacationers. Guides lead anglers on half- and full-day excursions to seek bonefish in the shallows; deep sea fishing is another popular option and groups of up to four can book a charter for a chance at a trophy catch; see page 251 for a list of guides.

Little Cayman

Day-trippers to **Little Cayman** find that the island is indeed petite, only 11 miles long and two miles across at its widest point. Perfect for a day-trip, the isle can easily be seen in a day with a rental car (and there's no need for visitors to worry about getting lost; only one road circles the island).

Vehicles from McLaughlin come with a full tank of gas, and must be returned that way.

Jeeps are available from **McLaughlin Jeep Rentals (**☎ 345-948-1000, fax 345-948-1001, littlcay@candw.ky). You must be at least 21 years of age and have a valid driver's license to rent a car. A Cayman Islands driving permit is also required (see page 55).

While driving on the island, visitors soon see that, with under 170 permanent residents, the island's largest population consists of **birds** and **iguanas**. Over 2,000 Little Cayman rock iguanas inhabit the island, so "Iguana Crossing" and "Iguana Right of Way" signs are posted along the road to protect the large lizards.

Little Cayman's chief draw is its **eco-tourism**: diving, fishing, and bird-watching. While flying in the same day rules out the opportunity for day-trippers to dive, **snorkelers** will find numerous chances to take a peek at what lies beneath the water's surface. The most famous site is **Bloody Bay Wall** off the

north side of the island. The wall is a short swim from shore and starts at a depth of only 20 feet, making it a favorite with snorkelers.

Anglers come to this tiny isle for its excellent fishing for bonefish and permit, both caught in the flats, and tarpon, reeled in from brackish Tarpon Lake. The **Southern Cross Club** (☎ 800-899-2582, 619-563-0017, relax@southerncrossclub.com, www.southerncrossclub.com) first attracted anglers to these waters; today **McCoy's Diving and Fishing Lodge** (☎ 800-626-0496, 345-948-0026, fax 345-948-0057, mccoy@candw.ky) also caters to fishermen. Day-trippers can arrange fishing guides from either of these lodges.

Birders enjoy the **Booby Pond Visitors Centre**. Operated by the National Trust, this 1.2-acre brackish mangrove pond is the home of the Caribbean's largest breeding colony of red-footed boobies and a breeding colony of magnificent frigate birds. Visitors can view the birds with telescopes (available for use any time) and see exhibits on the birds of Little Cayman in the visitors center.

Shop Till You Drop

Money Matters

Exchange Rates

The Caymanian dollar carries a fixed exchange rate of US $1.25 to CI $1. The US dollar is also accepted in shops and restaurants, along with travelers checks and most major credit cards. Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club, and Access are commonly accepted; Discover is accepted at some establishments.

Customs Concerns

There are restrictions on several items that can be purchased in the Cayman Islands but which may not be brought into the United States.

Harvesting of **black coral** depletes the sea's supply. Only jewelers licensed to remove the coral may do so, and without a certificate testifying that your purchase is from an approved seller your black coral may be confiscated in US Customs.

Travelers to (or in transit through) the US need to avoid purchasing anything made with **turtle products**. All goods – including oils, steaks, shells, and jewelry – made from turtles and turtle shells have been banned by US Customs. Passengers traveling through the US to other nations will have to surrender *all* turtle products at US Customs.

On the other hand, Cayman-produced rums and rum cakes are a popular purchase and can be found in many shops. **Tortuga Rum Cake** is made according to a 100-year-old family recipe, using five-year-old Tortuga Gold Rum; it is sealed in a red tin. Or, for travelers who want to skip the cake, a bottle of **Tortuga**, **Blackbear**, or **Cayman Gold** rum makes an inexpensive duty-free purchase. Local **arts and crafts** are also popular buys. Birdhouses made from coconuts, brooms woven from thatch, and pepper sauce distilled from fiery Scotch bonnet peppers to capture the spirit of the islands make inexpensive island souvenirs.

George Town

Grand Cayman is one of the Caribbean's great shopping destinations. The capital of the nation's shopping world is George Town. Along the George Town waterfront, on **West Bay Road** and **Harbour Drive**,

duty-free shops tempt travelers with china, perfumes, leather goods, watches, crystal, and, most especially, fine jewelry.

Prices average about 25% below regular retail price tags, although some goods run as much as 40% to 45% below US retail prices. However, travelers would be well advised to know their prices before they leave home; not all items are a bargain.

Jewelry is a popular purchase in the form of watches, custom-designed pieces and stones. Diamonds and other gemstones are found in most fine jewelry stores, as are 14K and 18K gold. Jewelry made from antique coins and doubloons recovered from shipwrecks around the world is very popular here.

Caymanite, a stone found only on the eastern end of Grand Cayman's East End and the bluff on Cayman Brac, is sold throughout the islands mounted as jewelry. The semi-precious stone, a form of dolomite, ranges from a light beige to a beautiful amber color and is often mounted in a gold setting.

Black coral is also a widespread commodity, and artisans design it into fine jewelry and small sculptures. You'll find black coral necklaces, charms, earrings, and more, often highlighted with gold inlays, sold in most of the fine jewelry shops.

Malls & Shopping Centers

KIRK FREEPORT
Cardinal Avenue, George Town
☎ 345-949-7477

The Kirk Freeport name is a Cayman institution, well-known among those seeking duty-free gifts.

The best-known of the Kirk Freeport stores is Cardinal Avenue's **Kirk Jewellers**, the exclusive Rolex distributor in the Cayman Islands. The shop also

stocks Tag Heuer, Omega, Breitling, Tudor, Gucci, Bulgari, Fendi, and other lines. Fine jewelry from designers such as Bulgari, Mikimoto, Soho, and Chaumet are popular purchases. Writing instruments and leather accessories from Cartier, Mont Blanc, Waterman, and A.T. Cross are also offered at duty-free prices.

Other shops under the Kirk Freeport umbrella include the exclusive **Cartier Boutique**, which offers 18K jewelry, watches, leather goods, perfumes, and pens, and **La Perfumerie I & II**, featuring fragrances from around the globe, including Chanel, Lancôme, Yves Saint Laurent, Givenchy, Clinique, and more.

DUTY FREE MALL
Church Street, George Town

One of the newest shopping centers is the Duty Free Mall, next to the Hard Rock Café on the waterfront. The $8 million mall is home to 22 stores including Havana Cigars, Just for Kids, Blackbeard's, and Café Splash. Even non-shoppers will find plenty of reasons for a stop: the mall is home to a 12,000-square-foot saltwater aquarium filled with sharks, eels and rays. The sharks are fed daily and educational lectures on marine life take place between 11 am and 1 pm. Save time for a trip up the observation tower for a good photo opportunity of George Town.

ANCHORAGE CENTRE
Harbour Drive and Cardinal Avenue
George Town
www.islandcompaniesltd.com

This open-air mall is home to several excellent jewelry stores. Here you'll find Grand Switzerland, which has elegant jewelry and watches, as well as

loose gemstones. Diamonds Direct offers diamonds from mines it deals with directly in Africa and Russia, and Caribbean Jewellers offers many renditions of marine life set in 14k gold. Other stores here include Churchill's Cigar Store, Flameworks glass sculpture, and London Jewellers Factory Store.

DOWNTOWN GEORGE TOWN

A variety of shops selling fine jewelry, clothing, designer sunglasses and the like are found at these centers:

- **The Duty Free Centre**
  Edward Street, George Town
- **Cricket Square**
  Elgin Avenue, George Town
- **Picadilly Centre**
  Elgin Avenue, George Town

Specialty Shops

Fine Jewelry & Watches

BERNARD K. PASSMAN'S BLACK CORAL
Fort Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-0123

Black coral in the form of fine jewelry, as well as sculpture and even cutlery sets are offered in this gallery. Passman was commissioned to create a black coral horse and corgi for Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip; his creations are considered works of art.

COLOMBIAN EMERALDS INTERNATIONAL
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 800-6-NO-DUTY
www.colombianemeralds.com

This popular Caribbean boutique, with locations in Antigua, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Martin and the USVI, sells not only emeralds but other fine gemstones. All purchases include certified appraisals, 90-day insurance and full international guarantees.

DIAMONDS DIRECT
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-945-6868

Diamonds are a shopper's best friend thanks to duty-free and tax-free prices at this store, which deals directly with mine sources in Africa and Russia.

DIAMONDS IN PARADISE
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 800-94-CARAT
www.dutyfree.com/dip

Offers a good selection of diamonds set in rings, bracelets, earrings and more.

DUTY FREE LTD.
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-945-2160

This shop, right on South Church Street just past where Harbour Drive becomes South Church, offers all types of gold jewelry, as well as treasure coins, gems, black coral, and watches. Paloma Picasso creations and Tiffany & Co. gifts available. Watches from Seiko, Sector, Guess, Bulova and other brands.

JEWELER'S WAREHOUSE
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 800-661-JEWEL
http://dutyfree.com/jw

This store has good prices on a variety of fine jewelry, from earrings starting under $100 and small strands of pearls for under $35 to fine gemstones with four-digit price tags.

LONDON JEWELLERS FACTORY STORE
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-9861

Fine gems and gold jewelry are the specialty of this outlet store, which sells many sample lines and production overruns at a discount price. Along with fine jewelry, this shop sells designer watches by Seiko, Calvin Klein, Festina, Alfex, and Wittnauer.

BRITISH OUTPOST
Duty Free Centre, Edward Street
☎ 345-949-0742

Along with jewelry, this large store is the exclusive agent for Keieer, Sector and Wittnauer watches.

Fine Linen

FAR AWAY PLACES
Shedden Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-7477

Far Away Places is well known for its linens and lace. Battenberg lace, towels, tablecloths, placemats, and other items fill the shop.

Antiques & Antique Jewelry

ARTIFACTS
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 345-949-2442

This shop specializes in rare coins and coin jewelry but also has a large inventory of silver, antique scientific instruments, West Indian maps, and Halcyon Days enamel works. It's fun to look around their collection of shipwreck coins.

Books

THE BOOK NOOK II
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-7392

This shop (along with its cousin on Seven Mile Beach) is excellent for its selection of both nonfiction and fiction books. You'll also find a good selection of Caribbean travel books at both (and we were pleased to see our *Adventure Guide to the Cayman Islands* in stock here, too!)

HOBBIES AND BOOKS
Piccadilly Centre on Elgin Avenue, George Town
☎ 345-949-0707

This longtime Caymanian favorite hosts many author events. You'll find a large array of Caymanian guidebooks, cookbooks, and other items of local interest here as well as bestsellers and popular works. (If you're traveling out of George Town toward Red Bay, you'll find a second new Hobbies and Books store at Grand Harbour shopping mall, ☎ 345-947-0909.)

China, Crystal & Figurines

CAYMAN GLASSBLOWING
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-945-3122

We spent one afternoon at a table in the mall watching glassmakers create beautiful handmade objects. Stepenn Zawistowski and his assistants form glass into sculptures of all sizes, from small collectibles to life-size marine life.

HOT TROPICS
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-4514

This perfume shop also sells china by Lenox, Spode, Royal Worcester, Royal Doulton and crystal by Swarovski and others.

KIRK FREEPORT GALLERY
Cardinal Avenue, George Town
☎ 345-949-7477

The Kirk Freeport Gallery sells Lalique, Swarovski crystal, collectible figurines, Hummel, Lladro, and other fine items. China and crystal collectors can also stop by the Waterford and Wedgwood Gallery on Cardinal Avenue.

Housed in a Tudor-style building, this shop includes an extensive collection of Waterford crystal from Ireland and Wedgwood china and crystal from England.

Cigars

Churchill's is the exclusive agent for Davidoff cigars.

CHURCHILL'S CIGAR STORE
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-945-6141

Imported and locally produced Cayman Crown and Cayman Premium cigars are the specialty of this shop. Cohiba, Hoyo de Monterry, Romeo y Juliete, Montecristo and other brands are found here.

Leather Goods

THE COACH FACTORY STORE
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-5395

Just steps from the cruise terminal, this duty-free shop sells Coach leather goods direct from the factory.

DE BAG MAN
Duty Free Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-7023

This shop sells a variety of fine leather goods in a range of prices.

KIRK LEATHER STORE
Kirk Freeport Centre
Cardinal Avenue, George Town
☎ 345-949-7477

The Kirk Leather Store on Albert Panton Street also sells designer leather goods from Paloma Picasso, Bally, Fossil, Moschino, and Fendi.

Perfumes & Cosmetics

HOT TROPICS
Anchorage Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-4514

This duty-free shop features perfumes by Dior, Chanel, Lancôme, Clinique, Elizabeth Arden, Estée Lauder and more. China and crystal also offered.

CARTIER BOUTIQUE
Kirk Freeport
Cardinal Avenue, George Town
☎ 345-949-7477

This elegant shop offers fragrances from around the globe: Chanel, Lancôme, Yves Saint Laurent, Givenchy, Clinique, and more.

Cameras & Audio Equipment

CAYMAN CAMERA, LTD.
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-8359

We were pleasantly surprised by the prices at this good camera store when we ran short of film. Often film prices in the islands are double what you'd find in the States; this shop sells film and accessories for the same price. You can also find batteries and inexpensive underwater cameras here, as well as serious photographic gear from Nikon, Hasselblad, Olympus, Minolta, Pentax and others.

SUNSET UNDERWATERPHOTO CENTRE
South Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-7415

More a lab and rental facility than a retail store, this shop has everything you'd need to start a hobby in underwater photography – including classes by re-

nowned underwater photographer Cathy Church. The shop offers Nikonos repairs, as well as rentals and E6 film processing.

Sunglasses

DE SUNGLASS MAN

The Duty Free Centre, George Town
☎ 345-949-8964

This shop advertises designer sunglasses at 40% off retail prices. Brands include Revo, Ray Ban, Oakley, Maui Jim, Armani, Versace, and others.

Grog & Spirits

BLACKBEARD LIQUORS

Crewe Road at Airport Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-8763
www.blackbeards-liquors.com

Ten flavors of locally produced Blackbeard Rum are sold at several outlets on Grand Cayman. These shops also sell Cuban cigars, coffee, beer, and wine.

TORTUGA RUMS

Selkirk Plaza, ☎ 345-945-7655
Airport, ☎ 345-949-2258

Premium gold, 151 proof, 98 proof dark rum, and coconut rum are sold by Tortuga Rums, as well as Rum Cream and Rum Liqueur. Tortuga Rums also makes a wonderful rum cake made with gold rum.

Local Crafts

CARIBBEAN EMPORIUM
Shedden Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-0466

You won't forget this shop – it literally has a sand floor. Designed to look like a small beach village, the shop sells a good array of food products, including Caribbean sauces and marinades, as well as crafts, T-shirts, and souvenirs.

HERITAGE CRAFT SOUVENIRS & GIFT MARKET
Harbour Drive and Goring Avenue, George Town
☎ 345-945-6041

This shop specializes in Caribbean gifts and souvenirs including straw hats, local music, Caribbean coffees and teas, artwork, hammocks, wood carvings, and more. The shop is opposite the National Museum, just steps from the cruise terminal.

Fashion Boutiques

ISLAND CASUALS
Cayside
Shedden Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-8094

Forget that bright sundress or the super cool shorts? You'll find all that and more at Island Casuals, which specializes in swimwear, polo shirts, casual separates, and tropical print shirts for men, women, and children.

Gifts & Souvenirs

CAYMAN ISLANDS NATIONAL MUSEUM
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 345-949-8368

This shop is a good stop even if you don't have time for a tour of the museum (there's a separate entrance for the store). It's housed in the old jail, and part of an old coral stone wall is exposed, giving the shop an interesting feel. You can purchase postcards, souvenirs, maps, Caribbean books, and even Caymanite jewelry here.

Art Galleries

PURE ART GALLERY AND GIFTS
South Church Street and Denham Thompson Way, George Town
☎ 345-949-9133

This is one of our favorite stores on the island; it's not in the main retail section of George Town but it's well worth the drive. The store is in a small home, with each room filled to the brim with all types of Caymanian and Caribbean art. Look for woodcarvings, artwork, crafts, coffeecakes, and even genuine Cayman license plates. Prices are not inexpensive but the selection is the best on the island.

West Bay Road

Although the choices are not as extensive as those in George Town, even the most dedicated shopper will find plenty of diversion along West Bay Road heading up Seven Mile Beach. Coconut Plaza, West Shore Centre, and Galleria Plaza are some of the top shopping areas. Look for duty-free liquor, jewelry, island clothing, and other vacation purchases along this

strip. The Marriott (formerly the Radisson), Westin Casuarina, and Treasure Island Resort each has numerous shops selling jewelry, resort clothing, and gift items.

Specialty Shops

Fine Jewelry

CHESTS OF GOLD
Hyatt Regency, ☎ 345-949-8846
Westin Casuarina, ☎ 345-949-5331

Numismatic jewelry, diamond creations, and champlevé enamel designs are set in gold (primarily 18K) at these popular shops.

MITZI'S
Bay Harbor Center, West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-5014

Mitzi's specializes in fine jewelry, including beautiful work by Carrera y Carrera, all in 18K gold.

SAVOY JEWELLERS
Queen's Court Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-7454

A Caymanian favorite, it features an extensive collection of diamonds, Hermès watches, the St. Petersburg Collection of Fabergé eggs, Erté sculptures, and other finery. All jewelry is 18K gold and transportation from island hotels is available upon request.

24-K MON JEWELERS
Treasure Island Resort, ☎ 345-949-9729
Buckingham Square (by Hyatt), ☎ 345-949-1499
Cayman Falls (opposite Westin), ☎ 345-945-7000

Coins, diamonds, gemstones, and gold jewelry are the specialty of these shops. Black coral, pearls, hand-enameled cloisonné, and custom creations.

Antiques & Antique Jewelry

VENTURE GALLERY
West Shore Centre, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-8657

This shop has an array of shipwreck coins and artifacts.

Books

THE BOOK NOOK
Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-4686

This bookstore is one of our favorite stops on Seven Mile Beach. We always find a good selection of Caribbean guidebooks and cookbooks here. Also has a large children's section, including toys for those restless young travelers.

Cigars

CHURCHILL'S CIGAR STORE
Inside De Bag Man
Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road (No phone)

This duty-free shop sells Cayman Crown hand-rolled cigars, as well as Cohiba, Romeo y Juliete, Montecristo, Hoyo de Monterry, and other imports.

LA HAVANA RESTAURANT & CIGAR EMPORIUM
Queen's Court Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-2345

This Cuban restaurant also has a showroom of Cuban cigars – Monte Cristo, Cohiba, Romeo y Julieta and more.

Leather Goods

LE CLASSIQUE SHOE AND LEATHER EMPORIUM
Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-7105

You'll find all styles of duty-free purses and shoes at this shop.

Sunglasses

DE BAG MAN
Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-6538

Along with leather goods, this shop sells designer sunglasses by Ray Ban, Revo, Oakley, Armani and others.

Grog & Spirits

BLACKBEARD LIQUORS
www.blackbeardsrumcompany.com

Ten flavors of locally produced Blackbeard Rum are sold at their numerous outlets on Grand Cayman. These shops also sell Cuban cigars, coffees, beer, and wines. See the website for locations and phone numbers.

TORTUGA RUMS
West Shore Centre, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-4163

Premium gold, 151 proof, 98 proof dark rum, and coconut rum are sold by Tortuga Rums, as well as Rum Cream and Rum Liqueur. Tortuga Rums also makes a wonderful rum cake made with gold rum.

Fashion

ISLAND CASUALS
Galleria Plaza, ☎ 345-945-0924
Hyatt Regency, ☎ 345-945-4359

Specializes in swimwear, polo shirts, casual separates, and tropical print shirts for men, women, and children.

LA PERLA
The Strand, West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-4979

This exclusive boutique features La Perla Italian swimwear, lingerie and resortwear.

Gifts & Souvenirs

TROPICAL TRADER
Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-949-8354

This shop claims to be Cayman's largest T-shirt store and they just might be. You'll also find crafts, coffees, island music, and more.

Children's Clothing & Toys

KAYMAN KIDS
Galleria Plaza, West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-2356

Clothing and toys in all price ranges and styles are available at this boutique. Among the most interesting items are the Caymanian Cottages – dollhouses designed to look like the cottages of the island. Other items include swimwear, heirloom clothing, hats, and shoes.

Art Galleries

PURE ART GALLERY & GIFTS
Hyatt Regency, West Bay Road
☎ 345-945-5633

All types of Caymanian and Caribbean art are showcased in this gallery, along with a variety of crafts. We purchased an inexpensive woven rug with the emblem of the Cayman Islands here; you'll also find a good variety of rum cakes.

After Dark

Some travelers assume that the Cayman Islands, with their early-to-rise scuba diving crowd, have little nightlife. But more activities now tempt night owls, especially along Seven Mile Beach, from steel drum bands to piano bars.

Bars & Clubs

Live music is found at many of the bars around the island. Several nightclubs also offer live music and DJ action and are very popular with younger travelers. Cover charges at clubs vary depending on the

performer and the day of the week; expect to pay between CI $5 and CI $15.

LEGENDZ
The Falls Shopping Centre
West Bay Road, George Town
☎ 345-945-5288

This nightclub is a favorite with young, energetic travelers and features the sound of live rock. You'll find plenty of activity here.

THE PLANET NITECLUB
Islander Complex, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-7169
www.planet.ky

This dance club is also a favorite with young travelers (read: beware during spring break!). Nightly activities range from Caribbean night to reggae and soca night to dance music.

SHARKEY'S NITECLUB
Cayman Falls Shopping Centre
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5366

Sharkey's is known for its dancing to live rock music on Tuesdays; comedy on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays (see Chuckles Comedy Club, below); and big-screen music theme nights.

LOGGIA LOUNGE
Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-1234, ext. 5209

When you are looking for a quiet, sophisticated place to have a nightcap and some conversation, the Loggia Lounge is a good choice. The lounge has a humi-

dor filled with Cuba's finest and a piano player tinkling out quiet favorites.

COCONUTS COMEDY CLUB

Falls Plaza (across from the Westin)
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-NUTS
Hours: from 9 pm, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday

For nearly a decade, Coconuts has been making visitors and residents laugh, first at the Holiday Inn and now at Legendz in The Falls Plaza. Comics stay one or two weeks at the club; reservations are suggested.

CHUCKLES COMEDY CLUB

☎ 345-945-5077
Hours: vary by location

This is sort of a floating comedy club, moving between the West Bay Polo Club and Sharkey's, depending on the night of the week. Several nights a week the club features the Big Kahuna.

DURTY REID'S

Red Bay Plaza, George Town
☎ 345-947-1860

This sports bar says it has "warm beer, lousy food, and surly help." Have some jerk chicken or pork and judge for yourself!

CAPTAIN BRYAN'S PATIO BY THE SEA

North Church Street at Mary Street, George Town
☎ 345-949-6163

Order up a half-pint of Tennent's Extra or Stone's Best Bitter at this bar that calls itself the best British pub for 5,000 miles. Extensive beer selection and pub grub, including steak and kidney pie, cod and

chips, chicken and mushroom pie, bangers and mash, and shepherd's pie. Out on the patio, enjoy a menu featuring local seafood.

THE BAREFOOT MAN

Mention Cayman and nightlife in the same sentence and the island's best-known performer comes to mind. George Nowak, aka the Barefoot Man, has been entertaining Cayman audiences for years, and his music was heard in *The Firm*. We first saw him at the Holiday Inn Grand Cayman, playing (yes, barefoot) on the sand behind the hotel to a standing-room-only crowd. (When we left later, cars were lining the road for miles on each side of the Holiday Inn, even though he played there most days every week.) Today, the old Holiday Inn is no more, now relocated to a new site. The Barefoot Man has moved on. He can now be found playing at Rum Point on Monday and Friday nights from 5 to 10 pm at the Rum Point Restaurant and 2 to 6 on Saturdays at the beach.

LONE STAR BAR AND GRILL
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5175

Every inch of available space seems to be occupied by T-shirts and autographed memorabilia donated by visiting celebrities. The bar has three satellite dishes, and all major games are televised. Come by for happy hour from 5 to 6:30 pm on weekdays.

WEST BAY POLO CLUB SPORTS BAR AND GRILL
Seven Mile Shops, West Bay Road
Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-9892
www.poloclub.ky

More than 15 TVs (including one with an 80-inch screen) broadcast just about any sporting event available. Pizza is served every evening until midnight, and the bar also features a nightly special: prime rib, sushi, Tex-Mex, barbecue, pasta, or stir fry. Sunday brunch is served from 10 am to 1 pm.

Evening Cruises

JOLLY ROGER
Bayside Dock, George Town
☎ 345-945-7245 or 945-SAIL
Admission

Sunset cruises are a popular way to see the island and a favorite with couples. This replica of a 17th-century galleon sails at dusk on Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Admission includes complimentary rum punch and appetizers; a full bar is also available. The *Jolly Roger* also offers dinner cruises on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday evenings. Those include complimentary rum punch and appetizers, Caribbean entrées with wine, dessert and coffee. Reservations must be made by 2 pm the day of the cruise.

NAUTILUS
North Church Street, George Town
☎ 345-945-1355
www.nautilus.ky
Admission: US $47.40 adults, $25 children

The *Nautilus* has a unique tour on Thursday evenings. The Murder Mystery Theater is scheduled

from 6:30 to 8 pm and includes a professional actor who interacts with the audience in trying to solve a "murder" on board. Unlimited hors d'oeuvres, as well as beer, wine, and rum punch, are available throughout the evening. The *Nautilus* also offers a weekly sunset comedy cruise with the Big Kahuna; food and beverages are included. Call for reservations.

CAPT. BRYANS
The Buccaneer, Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-949-0038
Admission

Sunset cruises go out on Tuesday through Saturday nights. Cash bar.

RED SAIL SPORTS
Multiple locations, including Seven Mile Beach
☎ 345-945-5965

We recently took a sunset dinner cruise with Red Sail Sports – it was one of the highlights of our trip. Red Sail Sports offers this sunset cruise from Rum Point on Sundays and other days from Seven Mile Beach. The two-hour sunset cruise departs at 5 pm during the winter months and 5:30 during the summer. Complimentary appetizers are served; a full cash bar is available.

Night Dive

ATLANTIS SUBMARINE
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 800-887-8571, 800-253-0493, 345-949-7700
www.atlantisadventures.com
Call for schedule
Admission: varies according to length and type of dive; see website for details

One of the best shows in town takes place beneath the water's surface every night. The coral, which can look colorless during the day, reveals vivid colors during the night hours. *Atlantis* offers a night dive on their submarine; it's a wonderful chance to look at the undersea world that's normally only seen by scuba divers.

Tarpon Feeding

If you're traveling with children (and even if you're not!), don't miss seeing the tarpon feeding at least once during your stay. Restaurants stagger their feeding times; each feeding draws huge tarpon (most three feet long) to compete for chunks of fish. Call each restaurant for the scheduled times and arrive a little early. You'll find tarpon feeding at:

Rackham's . . . . . ☎ 345-949-3860
The Wharf. . . . . ☎ 345-949-2231
Almond Tree . . . . . ☎ 345-949-2893

Theater

HARQUAIL THEATRE
Harquail Drive (off West Bay Road)
☎ 345-949-4519 or 345-949-5477
www.artscayman.org/harquail.htm
Admission

The Harquail Theatre is operated by the **Cayman National Cultural Foundation** and offers several programs including theatrical presentations, a playwriting competition, Caribbean evenings, and more. Call for schedule.

West Indies Show

CARIBBEAN DINNER PARTY
Hyatt Regency Grand Cayman
West Bay Road, Seven Mile Beach
Hours: Tuesday and Friday nights, 6:30 to 9:30
☎ 345-949-1234, ext. 5208
Admission

This twice-weekly show features limbo dancers, fire eaters, and a steel pan musician. The evening, which at press time was priced at CI $39, includes dinner of pepperpot soup, spicy conch stew, salads, Jamaican barbecued fish, jerk mahi mahi, and more.

Cinema

There's one movie theater in the Cayman Islands: **Cinema I & II**, on West Bay Road along Seven Mile Beach. For features, check the daily *Caymanian Compass* or call ☎ 345-949-4011.

Grand Cayman A to Z

American Consulate

The **US Consular Agency** is located in the offices of Adventure Travel, Rankins Plaza, Eastern Avenue, George Town, and is open during their office hours; ☎ 345-945-1511, fax 345-945-1811, e-mail adventlv@candw.ky.

American Express

The American Express Travel Service office is at **Elizabethan Square** on Shedden Road in George Town. For information, ☎ 345-949-8755 or 949-8351; fax 949-5602.

Babysitting

Most of the larger hotels offer **babysitting services** (and some, such as the Hyatt and Westin, have **supervised kids' programs**). Another option is **Baby Sitting and More** (☎ 345-949-1509), a licensed and insured company offering babysitting in your room by local mothers.

Banks

Here a bank, there a bank, everywhere a bank! With almost 600 banks on the island, you're never far from financial services. Most are found in George Town and offer all the services you'd expect at home, including ATMs.

Currency Exchange

Left with some Caymanian money upon departure? Not to worry – at the airport there's a currency exchange booth in the departure lounge at the bar. We were surprised to see rates better than the bank here! For approximate exchange rates, see page 31.

Dentists

Cayman Dental Services (☎ 345-947-4447) has dentists on call 24 hours a day, just in case.

You can also call the **Merren Dental Center** (☎ 345-949-2554) or **Robert Parr, DDS**, (Cayman Medical Centre, Eastern Avenue, ☎ 345-949-7645).

Grocery Stores

Many condominium owners stock up on groceries and have breakfast or lunch in their rooms. The island has several supermarkets. These are generally open Monday through Saturday, closed Sunday (although you'll find drug stores open daily).

- **Kirk Supermarket** at Eastern Avenue and West Bay Road.
- **Foster's Food Fair** has two locations: The Strand along West Bay Road, and on Airport Road.
- **Hurley's Supermarket** in Eden Shopping Centre on Walkers Road in George Town.
- In West Bay, **Republix Supermarket** has groceries (as well as same-day film processing).

Emergencies

Medical. . . . . ☎ 911 or 555

Hospitals

Grand Cayman is home to the **George Town Hospital** (☎ 345-949-8600 or call 555 or 911), which offers modern medical facilities; the hospital was recently renovated and expanded.

There are two medical clinics on Grand Cayman: the private Chrissie Tomlinson Memorial Hospital on Walkers Road, (☎ 345-949-6066) and **Cayman Medical and Surgical Centre** (☎ 345-949-8150, Monday through Friday 8:30 am to 5 pm, Saturday 9 am to noon).

Registered nurses are available from **Baby Sitting and More** (☎ 345-949-1509), which is licensed and insured to provide care.

Medevac service can be arranged at the airport when patients need to be flown to the US.

Hyperbaric Chamber

A two-person recompression chamber is available at the George Town Hospital on Grand Cayman. The facility is available 24 hours daily. Call ☎ 555 or 911.

Houses of Worship

BAHA'I
Boggy Sand Road, West Bay
☎ 345-949-3435

BAPTIST
First Baptist Church
Smith Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-0692

CATHOLIC
St. Ignatius
Walker's Road, George Town
☎ 345-949-6797

Christ the Redeemer Mission
Rev. Blackman Road, West Bay
☎ 345-949-7390

ANGLICAN CHURCH – CHURCH OF ENGLAND
St. Albans & St. Mary's
South Sound Community Centre
☎ 345-949-2757

St. George Anglican Church
George Town Courts
(off Eastern Avenue), George Town
☎ 345-949-5583

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST (LDS)
Smith Road
☎ 345-949-4499

METHODIST
Wesleyan Holiness Church
Turtle Farm Road
West Bay
☎ 345-949-3394

PRESBYTERIAN
Elmslie United Church
Harbour Drive, George Town
☎ 345-949-7923

SEVENTH DAY ADVENTISTS
Crewe Road, George Town
☎ 345-947-5279

Optical Services

Lose a contact lens or break your glasses? Stop by **Cayman Optical Express** (Seven Mile Shops, West Bay Road, ☎ 345-949-9600) or **Optical Outlook**

(Caymanian Village, North Sound Way, ☎ 345-949-0539).

Pharmacies

Cayman Drug in the Eden Centre (☎ 345-949-2957/8871) in George Town is the largest on the island.

Strand Pharmacy (The Strand Shopping Centre on West Bay Road, ☎ 345-949-7759) is open 7 am to 10 pm Monday through Saturday, 9 am to 6 pm Sunday.

Island Pharmacy (West Shore Centre on West Bay Road, ☎ 345-949-2597) is open 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Saturday; it has pharmaceutical products, as well as small gifts, suntan lotions, and more.

Photo Labs

With the huge dive business encouraging a lot of underwater photography, you'll find great photo services on-island, including one-hour processing. Some excellent labs include:

- **Cayman Camera**, downtown across from the Atlantis Submarine office, ☎ 345-949-8359.
- **Hottrax Photo**, West Shore Centre, Seven Mile Beach, ☎ 345-949-9047.
- **Photo Center**, Waterfront, George Town, ☎ 345-949-0030.
- **Photo Plus**, Photo Pharm Centre, Smith Road, George Town, ☎ 345-949-2420.

Post Office

Postage from the Cayman Islands to the US is CI 20¢ for a postcard, CI 30¢ for letters weighing up to a half-ounce.

Grand Cayman has no postal delivery routes, so all mail is placed in the boxes of either the **Main Branch** in George Town or the **Westshore Branch** on West Bay Road. The main post office serves as home for the **philatelic bureau**, open from 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, Monday through Friday, and from 8:30 to 1 pm on Saturday; stop in for Caymanian stamps and first-day covers.

Shoe Repair

If you bust a sole during your visit, stop by **No. 1 Shoe Repair**, Jetik Building, Walkers Road in George Town, ☎ 345-949-5595.

The area code for the Cayman Islands is ☎ 345.

Telephone & Internet

The Cayman Islands have excellent telecommunications service thanks to **Cable & Wireless (Cayman Islands) Ltd**. You'll find dependable, modern phone and Internet service on each of the islands.

AT&T, **MCI Direct** and **US Sprint** services are available for dialing from the islands to home. For information on telephone services and charges, see pages 31-32.

Throughout the islands, you'll find many public phones. Some accept coins only; others accept phone cards only; some accept both. You can purchase **phone cards** in denominations of $10, $15 and $25 at the Cable and Wireless office on Anderson Square on Shedden Road in George Town, at their Cayman Brac office, and at most service stations.

Video Rentals

Because of all the condominium properties with VCRs, you'll find a good selection of rental businesses on Grand Cayman. **Blockbuster** has locations at the Eden Centre in George Town (☎ 345-949-9500) and on West Bay Road in the Westshore Centre (☎ 345-949-4500).

Website

Check out the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism website at **www.caymanislands.ky** for news and weather, as well as details on accommodations, attractions, and more. You can also order brochures or send questions to the Department of Tourism through an e-mail link from the site.

Little Cayman

Just 80 miles northeast of Grand Cayman, but worlds apart in terms of atmosphere, Little Cayman is tailor-made for visitors looking for secluded scuba diving, fly- or spin-fishing, and nature. Appropriate to its name, Little Cayman is only 11 miles long and two miles at its widest point. Boasting none of the glitz of Grand Cayman, Little Cayman does greet guests with all the basic comforts, including several small lodges and condominiums with air conditioning, satellite TV, and telephone service.

With just over 100 permanent residents, the island's largest population is of birds and iguanas. Over 2, 000 Little Cayman rock iguanas inhabit the island, so many that "Iguana Crossing" and "Iguana Right of Way" signs are posted throughout the island to protect these lizards, which can grow up to five feet in length.

Little Cayman's chief draw is its eco-tourism: **diving**, **fishing**, and **bird-watching**. The late Philipe Cousteau called the island's Bloody Bay Wall one of the best dives of his life; today it's still a favorite with divers.

Anglers come to this tiny isle for its excellent bonefishing. Bonefish and permit, both caught in the flats, and tarpon, reeled in from brackish Tarpon Lake, draw fishermen. The **Southern Cross Club** fishing lodge first attracted anglers to these waters; today **McCoy's Diving and Fishing Lodge** also caters to fishermen. Guests at other island resorts can arrange fishing guides from these lodges.

Birders enjoy the **Booby Pond Nature Reserve**. Operated by the National Trust, this brackish mangrove pond covering 1.2 acres is the home of the

Caribbean's largest breeding colony of red-footed boobies and a breeding colony of magnificent frigate birds.

Getting Here

By Air

The dirt airstrip of **Edward Bodden Airport** has twice-daily service from Grand Cayman. Island Air departs on the 45-minute flight twice daily. Passengers may check up to 55 pounds of baggage free of charge; excess baggage is charged US 50¢ per pound. Flights are also available on Island Air from Cayman Brac to Little Cayman. Special fares are available for children under age 12.

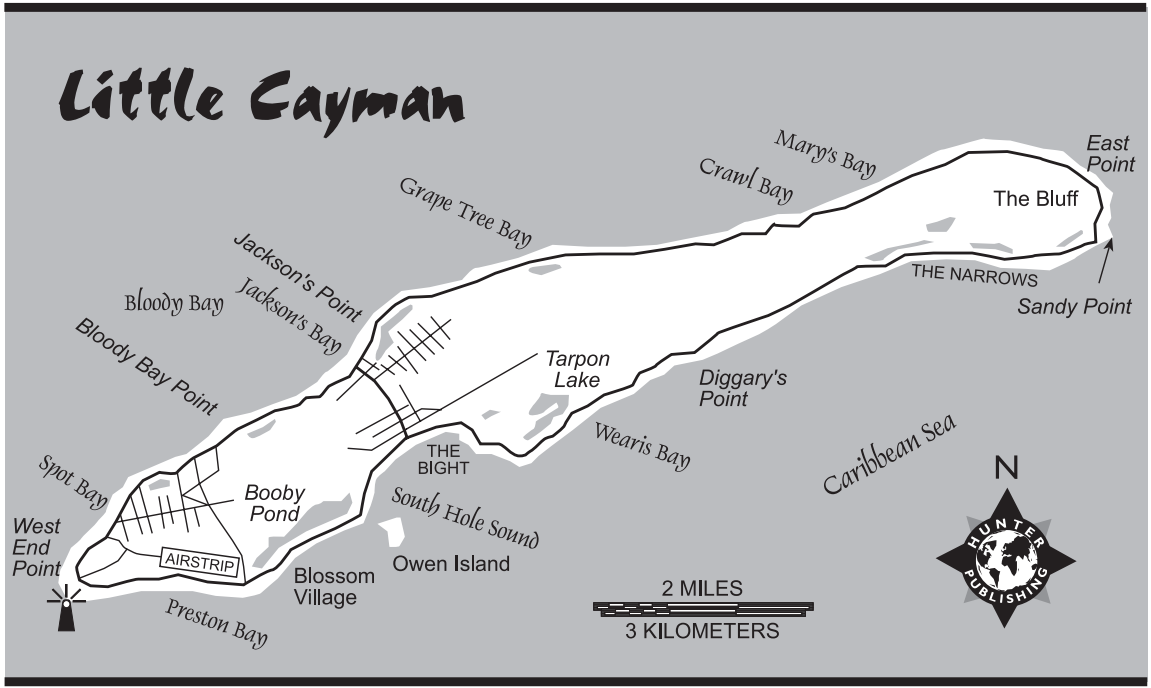
Call Island Air at ☎ 345-949-5252, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm; fax 345-949-7044, or see www.islandair.ky.

Getting Around

On Wheels

By Car

Only one car rental agency operates on the island. **McLaughlin Jeep Rental** (☎ 345-949-1000, fax 345-948-1001) offers daily and weekly rates for Jeeps; only standard transmission Jeeps are available. To call the rental agency on arrival, pick up the phone on the side of the airport building. Vehicles are right-hand drive; driving is on the left side of the road. A Caymanian driver's permit is required for rentals; obtain one at McLaughlin's.



Little Cayman

DRIVER'S PERMITS

The required Caymanian driver's permit is available at McLaughlin's for a US $7.50 fee. A major credit card or cash deposit is also required.

WARNING

There is a 25 mph speed limit on the island.

By Bicycle

Another popular mode of transportation is the bicycle. Guests will find that most resorts offer complimentary use of bicycles and, with practically no traffic on the roads, they offer a peaceful way to see the island, journey to a secluded beach, or pop into Blossom Village. The old cycles may not be the fastest vehicles, but, after all, this is Little Cayman. What's the hurry?

Orientation

Blossom Village

Most of the island's residents live on its southernmost tip near a community called Blossom Village. Here you'll find island services, including the airport, car rental agency, grocery store, gas station, real estate office, restaurant, and several accommodations. The island's main road curves through town, but there's certainly no need to worry about traffic. So little happens on this island, in fact, that there's only one policeman (but locals warn that he's happy

to use his new radar speed gun) and one taxi (but the driver has another job, so don't expect pick up at a moment's notice).

Past the main road, side streets wind through Blossom Village, curving past cheery neighborhoods where everyone knows one another and visitors are greeted with waves and smiles. A small **cemetery**, many of its graves marked with conch shells and white crosses bleached even whiter by the Caribbean sun, marks the final resting place of former Little Cayman residents.

Parallel to Blossom Village stretches a protected **marine park**, home of some of the top snorkeling and dive spots on the island. Here divers find Grundy Gardens, Windsock, Harold's Holes, Jay's Reef, Charlie's Chimney's, Patty's Point, Pirates Reef and Preston Reef, each the location of myriad marine life and underwater formations. Several dive operators offer trips to popular sites.

Beyond Blossom Village

The main road, known formally as **Guy Banks Road** on the southern stretch of the island, winds north past scrubby brushland. Soon the road passes the **Booby Pond Nature Reserve**, a brackish mangrove pond. Trees are dotted with white birds – red-footed boobies – and overhead the distinct shape of the magnificent frigate bird can be seen soaring on the trade winds.

The bay to the north of Owen Island, visible on the right as you travel north from Blossom Village, is known as **South Hole Sound**, and this inlet marks one of the few intersections on the island. Here the **Crossover Road**, or more formally **Spot Bay Road**, crosses to the other side of the island.

Continuing north, the main road soon loses its pavement and gives way to packed dirt and sand, safe for all vehicles. Stay on the road, however, because deep sand is found at some turnoffs. Along this stretch of road you'll pass many shallow ponds on the left side, each lined with low vegetation that forms a home for the island's bountiful bird population. Birders enjoy a drive by **Tarpon Lake**, a favorite with anglers. The brackish lake has tarpon ranging from three to 15 pounds. Birders will find more to interest them along the pond's shoreline. Scrubby undergrowth is thick as you work your way to the north side of the island, climbing a slight rise. This is the island's driest end, a place where the terrain becomes marked with tall cacti and century plants (agave).

East Point is the easternmost point of the island. From here you can see nearby Cayman Brac, seven miles across the channel. This stretch of Little Cayman is nearly deserted, with just a few lone cacti overlooking acres of undeveloped land.

The road then turns back south and traces the northern coast of Little Cayman, a stretch that's one of the favorites with divers. By far the most popular area is **Bloody Bay Wall**, near where the Crossover Road comes out on the north coast road. This stretch of coastline is a marine park safeguarding what has often been called one of the best dive locations on the globe.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

For many years, Little Cayman's most famous resident, actor **Burgess Meredith**, had a vacation home along this coastline.

Best Places To Stay

ACCOMMODATIONS PRICE SCALE	
Price scale is based on a standard room for two persons, per night.	
Inexpensive	under $100
Moderate	$100-$200
Expensive	$201-$300
Deluxe	over $300

Resorts & Hotels

LITTLE CAYMAN BEACH RESORT
PO Box 51, Blossom Village
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 813-323-8727, fax 813-323-8827
Reservations: ☎ 800- 327-3835
www.littlecayman.com
Moderate

This beachfront property is our favorite type of island resort: wonderfully relaxed and friendly. Little Cayman Beach Resort brings together the amenities of a Grand Cayman resort with the privacy of a getaway on Little Cayman. The island's largest property is specially tailored for those who want luxury intermingled with adventures. This pink, two-story conch-shell pink resort overlooks a shallow area inside the reef on the south side of the island. Just outside the reef lie top scuba spots accessible through **Reef Divers**, the on-site operator. Beginners can learn with a resort course or obtain open water certification. Underwater photographers can see their

shots the same day; an underwater photo and video center has E-6 processing and rentals.

Non-divers also enjoy this resort for its laid-back atmosphere. Hammocks sway just yards from the shoreline; loungers line the edge of the freshwater pool a few steps from the bar.

Rooms include air conditioning, balcony or patio, color TV, ceiling fan, and beach. New oceanfront rooms include wet bars, microwaves and coffeemakers. There's a bar, gift shop, restaurant, freshwater pool, dive shop, underwater photo center, fitness center and hot tub.

★ TRAVELING WITH CHILDREN

You will find that cribs are available at most properties. However, you should bring baby needs, including disposable diapers and baby food. They're difficult to find on Little Cayman.

PIRATES POINT RESORT
Box 43, Preston Bay
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 345-948-1010, fax 345-948-1011
www.piratespointresort.com
Moderate

This 12-room resort is a favorite with divers and it's easy to see why. Four dive instructors reveal the secrets of Bloody Bay Wall, from sheer cliffs to delicate sponges and coral formations. Non-divers find plenty of activity (or non-activity, if they so choose) at Pirates Point as well. Owner Gladys Howard is active in eco-tourism. The lobby of Pirates Point is filled with nature guidebooks, and Gladys also has a nature-trail guide and fishing guide to take visitors

out for a day or half-day of fishing, birding, or just to learn more about the island's indigenous species. The resort offers plenty of temptation to just laze the day away on a powdery white beach or around their pool as well. Guest cottages are simple and light, decorated in Caribbean colors. Rooms include ceiling fan, tile floors, and private baths. Drinking water is produced by the resort's own reverse-osmosis plant.

After a day in the sun, guests can relax in the island's unique bar, furnished with artwork created by previous guests. (The grounds of Pirates Point also feature guest-donated artwork, made of everything from coconut shells to driftwood.)

But there's no doubt that dining ranks as one of the top attractions at Pirates Point. Along with her expertise in natural history, Gladys Howard is also a cordon bleu chef. While guests may like roughing it during the day, at night they can enjoy gourmet meals as elegant as those found at any of the Caribbean's finest resorts. Gladys boasts that "my kitchen never closes." An all-inclusive dive package is available, including a deluxe room with private bath, three gourmet meals daily (with wine), open bar with unlimited drinks, two boat dives daily, use of all dive equipment, airport transfers, use of bicycles, and hammocks, lounges, and beach towels. And for non-divers, an all-inclusive package includes everything except diving. (Hotel tax and 15% gratuity are not included.)

McCOY'S DIVE LODGE
PO Box 29, Bloody Bay
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 345-948-0026, fax 345-948-0057
Reservations: ☎ 800-626-0496
www.mccoyslodge.com.ky
Moderate

Tucked beneath shady trees on a long stretch of beach, McCoy's Dive Lodge is somewhat of a legend on Little Cayman, a name that's well known with both divers and anglers. One of the island's earliest accommodations remains a favorite with active travelers. Two dive boats, the 30-foot *Caymaniac* and the 28-foot *Caymanak*, transport divers to sites around the island. Anglers can head out aboard the resort's 32-foot deep-sea fishing boat, the *Reel McCoy*.

Eight guest rooms greet visitors with rustic charm. Tucked beneath shady trees and always in sight of the deserted beach, the rooms feature private baths and air conditioning. Guests can dine right on premises. Other facilities include a small freshwater pool with Jacuzzi jets.

SOUTHERN CROSS CLUB
PO Box 44
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 345-948-1099, fax 345-948-1098
Reservations: ☎ 800-899-2582
Moderate

The Southern Cross holds the distinction as the island's first resort; it is along **South Hole Sound**. This resort was recently renovated, and today five beachfront cottages offer 10 guest rooms decorated in island colors; each room has air conditioning, ceiling fans, (no phones or TV) and plenty of water from

the inn's own desalinization plant. Facilities include a freshwater swimming pool and outdoor bar.

Southern Cross has long been a favorite destination with Caribbean anglers. Both deep-sea and tackle fishing for bonefish, tarpon, and permit are offered here. The Southern Cross Club has a 24-foot deepsea fishing boat and a resident fishing guide to make sure you'll return home with plenty of fish tales.

Divers also find everything they need at this resort. Three dive boats offer daily dives at this PADI and NAUI certified shop. This is now an IANTD Nitrox facility. If a day of diving and fishing builds your appetite, that's no problem at this resort.

Condominiums & Villas

CAYMAN VILLAS
☎ 345-945-4144 or 800-235-5888, fax 345-949-7471
www.caymanvillas.com

Cayman Villas represents several properties on Little Cayman in a variety of price ranges.

- **Sunset Cottage**

This two-bedroom, two-bath home is located seaside. It includes a screened porch off the master bedroom and another off the living/guest bedroom. Deluxe.

- **Suzy's Cottage**

A one-bedroom property on a white sand beach, it can host up to six guests. Amenities include air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TV, and more. Expensive.

- **Little Cayman Cottage**

With space for up to six guests, this two-bedroom cottage is situated on the beach. The cottage has a screened porch but is not air conditioned. Expensive.

CONCH CLUB CONDOMINIUMS
PO Box 51, Blossom Village
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 813-323-8727
Reservations: ☎ 800-327-3835
www.conchclub.com
Deluxe

Just north of Blossom Village, this upscale condominium project is an exciting development on Little Cayman. The resort offers a host of amenities: a restaurant, bar, fitness center, game room, beauty shop, and more. The lemon-yellow units are excellent for several couples traveling together or for families. Divers will find the Conch Club in walking distance of one of the island's best dive shops. The two-story condominiums are just steps from the powdery beach.

The property has been undergoing expansion. Phase two was underway at press time, adding eight two- and three-bedroom units with ceramic tile floors, carpeted bedrooms, ceiling fans, central air conditioning, washer and dryer and more. The new addition joins the 12 units in phase one. The complex now offers two- and three-bedroom units. Two-bedroom units, spanning 1,700 square feet, include one queen, two twins, and one double convertible bed, as well as 2½ baths. At 2,000 square feet, the three-bedroom units offer one queen, one double, and two twin beds, plus three baths. All units have a fully equipped kitchen, living and dining room, laundry facilities, ceiling fans, daily housekeeping, and use of pool, Jacuzzi, and dock on the property. Several meal plans are available for guests; meals are taken at the **Bird of Paradise Restaurant** at Little Cayman Beach Resort next door.

Guests at the Conch Club can also enjoy scuba diving at Little Cayman Beach Resort. Full equipment

rental, diving courses, and underwater photography equipment are available (see page 215).

PARADISE VILLAS

PO Box 48
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 345-948-0001, fax 345-948-0002
Moderate

Located next door to the Hungry Iguana restaurant (and just steps from Blossom Village), these cozy villas are perfect for those who'd like housekeeping facilities but also want the option of both a nearby eatery and a grocery store. The villas, two units to a cottage, lie right on the beach. Each includes two twin beds or one king, a futon that can sleep one adult or two kids, a back patio overlooking the sea, full kitchen with microwave, toaster and coffee maker, and air conditioning. Facilities include a swimming pool and nearby restaurant.

SEA VIEW VILLA

PO Box 29
Little Cayman, BWI
Reservations: ☎ 317-846-7017, fax 317-846-0217
Expensive

This villa on the island's south side rents by the week and can accommodate up to six guests in its two bedrooms. It has air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TV and more.

Live-Aboards

LITTLE CAYMAN DIVER II

☎ 800-458-BRAC
Deluxe

Well, it's not exactly a small inn, but this live-aboard operates much like one. Based off Little Cayman,

the boat accommodates 10 passengers in five cabins, each with a private bath. PADI, NAUI, SSI, NASDS, and YMCA affiliated, this operator has been in business for 10 years. Video rentals offered.

Best Places To Eat

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, Diners Club, and Access are commonly accepted; Discover is accepted at some establishments.

Some restaurants add a 15% gratuity to the bill, so make sure you don't inadvertently tip twice.

DINING PRICE SCALE	
Pricing includes one entrée, with glass of wine and coffee.	
Inexpensive	under $25
Moderate	$25-$40
Expensive	over $40

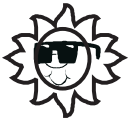
Informal Dining

HUNGRY IGUANA
☎ 345-948-0007
Inexpensive to moderate

The only stand-alone restaurant on the island is the Hungry Iguana, near the airport. The seaside eatery, named for an iguana often seen at the airport, now sports a 40-foot mural of its namesake. Continental buffet breakfasts start the day; lunch and dinner feature jerk chicken, grouper sandwiches, prime rib, and burgers.

Resort Restaurants

A surprising number of resorts also offer topnotch dining. **Pirates Point** (☎ 345-948-1010) showcases the talents of cordon bleu owner-chef Gladys Howard and serves up gourmet cuisine, and the **Southern Cross Club** (☎ 800-899-2582) provides spectacular dining.



Sunup To Sundown

Beaches

Owen Island

Owen Island is uninhabited; it spans just 11 acres and is a popular day-trip destination for picnickers, who can reach the island's sandy beaches by rowboat. Free.

Point of Sand

This isolated strip of pinkish sand is our favorite on Little Cayman. Swimmers and picnickers find an excellent spot at Point of Sand, aka Sandy Point. Turn right off the main road where you see a stop sign at the approaching road. The sand is packed for the first half of the drive, but stop at the wide section. Do not attempt to take vehicles down to the beach because of deep sand. It's a long walk back to town and there are no facilities or telephones in this park.

The beach, luminescent with beautiful pink sand, is one of the island's prettiest and also most secluded. You very well might spend the entire day on this stretch of beach and never see another person. On weekends, visitors from Cayman Brac often come

over to enjoy the beach. A covered picnic table invites you to enjoy a quiet lunch with the sound of the sea as background music. Free.

Scuba Diving

Its name may be "little," but this island is a giant in the world of scuba diving. Along its 10-mile length, 57 dive sites are marked with moorings. The most famous site is Bloody Bay Wall on the north side of the island. The wall drops off just a short swim from the shore at a depth of only 20 feet, making it a favorite with snorkelers as well. See pages 227-228 for a list of dive operators.

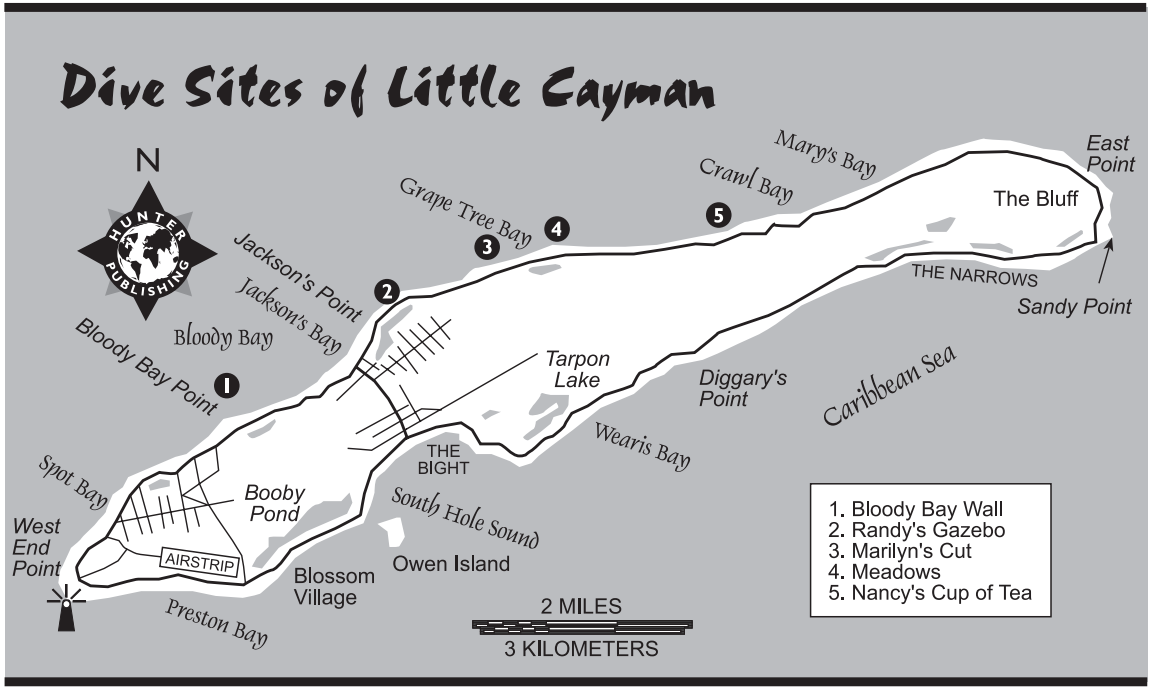
MOLLY THE MANTA

Divers who have enjoyed Little Cayman for many years will miss Molly the Manta, a giant manta ray (with a 12-foot span) that was a familiar sight on night dives in this region. The manta was spotted frequently along the north coast and on the south coast flats from 1991 through 1995. She was also seen off Bloody Bay and would swoop through the water, scooping up plankton that were attracted by divers' lights. Today Molly is no longer around, and it is believed she has reached maturity and gone off in search of a mate.

Best Dive Sites

BLOODY BAY WALL

Starting at a depth of just 25** feet, this site is a favorite with every level of diver and is considered one of the best dive sites in the Caribbean. Named one of


Dive Sites of Little Cayman
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
Jackson's Point
Jackson's Bay
Bloody Bay
Bloody Bay Point
Grape Tree Bay
Mary's Bay
Crawl Bay
East Point
The Bluff
THE NARROWS
Sandy Point
Tarpon Lake
Diggary's Point
Caribbean Sea
Wearis Bay
THE BIGHT
Spot Bay
Booby Pond
South Hole Sound
West End Point
AIRSTRIP
Blossom Village
Owen Island
Preston Bay
2 MILES
3 KILOMETERS
1. Bloody Bay Wall
2. Randy's Gazebo
3. Marilyn's Cut
4. Meadows
5. Nancy's Cup of Tea

the top dive sites by the late Philipe Cousteau, the wall is thick with sponges and corals and also features many formations such as chimneys, canyons, and coral arches. The wall is a spectacular sight, dropping into sheer blackness from the clear turquoise shallows just inches away.

NANCY'S CUP OF TEA

On the north side of the island off Big Channel, this dive site begins at a depth of just 35 feet before plunging into inky waters. Decorated with multicolored sponges, as well as gorgonians. Look for lots of marine life here.

MEADOWS

West of Nancy's Cup of Tea, this shallow site is home to eagle rays, groupers, and more. Small caverns and overhangs make this spot special.

MARILYN'S CUT

Off Grape Tree Bay on the north side of the island, the cut or crevice leads to a wall filled with sponges and gorgonians.

RANDY'S GAZEBO

Out from Jackson's Point, Randy's Gazebo is noted for its tunnels and swim-throughs. This wall dive includes a natural arch that's a favorite with underwater photographers.

Snorkel Excursions

We have found good snorkeling just about anywhere around the island, but one of the top places for snorkelers is also the island's top dive spot: **Bloody Bay Wall**. The reef starts in shallow water, so snorkelers can enjoy spotting the rich marine life at this site.

You'll also find that several other dive sites are favored by snorkelers. **Nancy's Cup of Tea**, **The Meadows**, and **Jackson Reef** are all popular because the sea floor starts at a shallow level.

Owen Island, on the south side of the island, is also home to good snorkeling, especially on the south side. The island is accessible by boat.

Point of Sand, on the eastern end of the island, is not only one of the island's best beaches but it is also a good snorkel site.

Several operators offer snorkel trips to these and other shallow dive sites. Snorkel trips run between **US?** $15 and $35.

Dive & Snorkel Operators

CONCH CLUB DIVERS
☎ 800-327-3835 or 345-948-1026
www.conchclub.com
Scuba & snorkel

LITTLE CAYMAN DIVERS
☎ 800-458-2722 or 345-948-1429

MCCOY'S DIVING & FISHING LODGE
☎ 800-626-0496 or 345-948-0026
www.mccoyslodge.com.ky
Scuba & snorkel

PARADISE DIVERS
☎ 877-3-CAYMAN or 345-948-0001
www.paradisevillas.com, www.paradise-divers.com
Scuba & snorkel

PIRATES POINT RESORT
☎ 345-948-1010
Scuba & snorkel

REEF DIVERS LITTLE CAYMAN
☎ 800-327-3835 or 345-948-1642
www.littlecayman.com
Scuba & snorkel

SOUTHERN CROSS CLUB
☎ 800-899-2582 or 345-948-1099
www.southerncrossclub.com
Scuba & snorkel

Underwater Photography

REEF PHOTO AND VIDEO CENTERS
Little Cayman Beach Resort
☎/fax 345-948-1063 or 800-327-3835
www.littlecayman.com/html_docs/reef-photo.htm

This center offers rental equipment and instruction. Both 35mm and video cameras are available for rent. The Nikonos V Camera system with an automatic flash, 28mm wide angle lens, and basic photo lesson rents for $39 for a half-day boat trip or $59 for 24 hours. Video rental systems include a Hi8mm video camera in housing, one tape, a basic video lesson, and up to one hour of recording time at $75 for a morning, two-dive boat trip. Additional lenses and flashes are also available for rent.

Reef Photo also offers several photo classes. A coaching session covering any aspect of photography – from wide-angle shots to maintenance of underwater cameras – is available. PADI certification as an underwater photographer, a three-day course, is also available. This course includes two rolls of film, processing, and critique sessions. A similar PADI underwater videographer course is available for the same price **what is the cost of these two courses?**.

SITA PHOTO CHALLENGE

If you come home with an unbeatable shot of your vacation on Little Cayman, consider entering the SITA (Sister Islands Tourism Association) Photo Challenge. Scheduled for late August, the contest is open to both professional and amateur photographers. ☎ 345-948-1033 or 345-948-1323, fax 345-948-1045, www.sisterislands.com.

Fishing

Shore, reef, and deep-sea fishing are available year-round and local guides can provide tackle and point out the best fishing spots. **Catch-and-release** is encouraged by local captains and applies to all catches that will be not eaten and all billfish that aren't record contenders. Reef fishing is also found along the many miles of reefs that surround this island. Little Cayman is the top destination of the three Cayman Islands for those using light tackle or fly-rods.

Fly-fishing continues to grow in popularity here but anglers should bring all their equipment – guides and charters do not supply saltwater fly rods.

Bonefishing, while not as good as at some islands in the Caribbean or the Florida Keys, is a favorite activity and a challenge to anglers. These three- to eight-pound fish are seen in the shallow areas called muds, places where the sea is churned up by the bottom-feeding fish. Guides recommend baiting with fry. Bonefish can be caught all day although, like other types of fishing, the success rate depends on many factors such as weather and tides. The best bonefishing around Little Cayman is usually found at the South Hole Sound. Bonefishing operators typ-

ically charge about $110 for a half-day of fishing or $220 for a full day.

Tarpon fishing is also popular on Little Cayman. Tarpon Pond, a brackish lake north of Blossom Village, is home to many 20-pound tarpon. Fly fishermen will have best luck at this site in early morning and late afternoon.

If you are looking for deep water action, charters seek gamefish, including **blue marlin**, **yellowfin tuna**, **wahoo**, **dolphin** (dorado) and **barracuda**. Taking out a charter boat is not an inexpensive proposition, but for many visitors it's the highlight of their trip. A half-day charter begins at about US $300 and may range as high as $1,100 for a full-day trip aboard a large charter with state-of-the-art equipment and tackle.

Fishing Guides

Whether you're staying on the island or coming over on a day-trip, you can enjoy fishing with a local guide if you give advance notice.

MCCOY'S DIVING AND FISHING LODGE

☎ 800-626-0496 or 345-948-0026
www.mccoyslodge.com.ky

McCoy's Lodge has guides on staff year-round. Sam McCoy has been leading fishing excursions here for 30 years and son Chip McCoy is widely considered the best light tackle fishing guide on the island (he also offers fly-fishing). Fishermen should bring their own fly-fishing equipment, but light tackle equipment is available. McCoy's is also fully equipped for deep-sea fishing; ice, bait, and tackle are provided.

SOUTHERN CROSS CLUB
☎ 800-899-2582 or 345-948-1099
www.southerncrossclub.com

Three vessels, 16 to 24 feet in length, take groups of two, three or four deep-sea fishing. Full- and half-day reef fishing also available.

Spa

NATURE SPA
Little Cayman Beach Resort
PO Box 51, Blossom Village
Little Cayman, BWI
☎ 813-323-8727, fax 813-323-8827
www.littlecayman.com

Even the smallest of the Cayman Islands is home to an excellent spa facility. Little Cayman Beach Resort is known for both its diving and its laid-back atmosphere. Hammocks sway just yards from the shore; chaise lounges line the freshwater pool just steps from the bar. The resort is also home to the Nature Spa, which offers a range of massages, as well as a hair and beauty salon. "Being the only spa on Little Cayman, we have brought together a superb team of internationally trained therapists," explains Mark Thwaites, head therapist.

The resort offers an extensive spa menu. Facials include a mini facial, a deep-pore cleansing facial, and the radiance aromatherapy facial, with a combination scalp and facial massage. Sea salt body polish and marine algae body wraps treat the body. Several therapeutic massages are available, ranging from 30 to 90 minutes; another option is a foot massage with a sea salt exfoliation treatment, followed by a hydrating body milk foot massage **what is body milk? Site says "body mask" but no ref to feet/massage**. The spa also offers salon services.

Guided Tours

LITTLE CAYMAN NATIONAL TRUST
☎ 345-949-0121

Guided tours of the island are led by Gladys Howard, National Trust Chapter Chairman and owner of the Pirates Point Resort. Tours are conducted every Sunday morning; for more information contact the National Trust at the number above, or Gladys Howard, ☎ 345-948-1010. A CI $1 donation to the Little Cayman National Trust is asked.

LCB TOURS
Blossom Village
☎ 800-327-3835 or 345-948-1033, fax 345-948-1040
lcbr@candw.ky

This tour company visits the Bird Sanctuary **which one - the only mention of a "Bird Sanctuary" has been on Grand Cayman, none listed in this chapter. Do you mean Booby Pond, or something else?**, museum, and more; snorkel trips are also available.

Sightseeing & Excursions

Most of the sights on Little Cayman are natural rather than man-made. Outdoor activities, especially scuba diving and fishing, draw most visitors. Little Cayman presents visitors with plenty of walking and hiking opportunities as well. Almost non-existent traffic, a flat grade on all but the island's easternmost end, and wide roads make Little Cayman perfect for a stroll or hike. Stroll the quiet streets of Blossom Village, the main road out to Tarpon Lake, or the island's beautiful beaches.

For more off-the-beaten-path hiking (and no path on Little Cayman is too beaten), check out the **Salt**

Rock Nature Trail. The trail winds its way from Salt Rock Bay (across from the dock on the north side of the island) through natural habitat and is a favorite hike for birders and those interested in Little Cayman fauna. Look for the 17 endemic species plus orchids, bromeliads, cacti, and mahogany trees. Iguanas, blue land crabs, curly tailed lizards, and many of the island's bird species are spotted as well.

The trail winds past the old railroad that was constructed to serve a former phosphate mining business. Another highlight is **Pirates Well**, a cave fed by a freshwater well. Discovered in 1994, the cave has not yet been fully explored.

☛ DID YOU KNOW?

The Booby Pond Nature Reserve has been designated an international RAMSAR site. For this recognition, which falls under the United Nations convention to protect wetlands for waterfowl habitats, a site must meet strict environmental criteria and be protected by local law.

BOOBY POND NATURE RESERVE
Southwest side of island

Birders enjoy this facility, open Monday through Saturday, 2 to 5 pm. Operated by the National Trust, this 1.2-mile-long **at beginning of chapter it says 1.2 acres; which is correct?** brackish mangrove pond is the home of the Caribbean's largest breeding colony of **red-footed boobies** (*Sula Sula*) and a breeding colony of **magnificent frigate birds**. Approximately 30% of the Caribbean population of red-footed boobies resides at this pond. Even without the help of binoculars, you can view the large white

birds (or their large, gray offspring) in the trees. Over 7,000 make their home here. The **Visitors Centre** includes exhibits on the island's many indigenous species, from the common crab to the seed shrimp to the pond's many resident birds. Friendly volunteers staff the center and welcome questions about the wildlife and about island life.

For a close-up look you can view the birds through one of two telescopes (available for use any time) on the porch. One telescope is positioned for use with wheelchairs or for those who would like to sit. The boobies fly about 40 mph and nest in crude constructions made of rough sticks. Admission is free, although donations are welcomed. A small gift shop sells locally made crafts and artwork.

WHAT'S THAT ROTTEN EGG SMELL?

Occasionally, Booby Pond will smell like rotten eggs or sulfur. The odor is the result of hydrogen sulfide gas created from decomposing organic material in the pond. Under normal conditions, the gas is released into the pond water, but when the water level drops the harmless gas is released into the air.

LITTLE CAYMAN MUSEUM

Blossom Village
☎ 345-948-1033

Learn more about the history of this small island in this museum. You'll learn that **Blackbeard** stopped here with his pirates for fresh water (and, some say, to bury his treasure in a brick-lined cave). Other exhibits recall the battle of Bloody Bay.

Shop Till You Drop

Little Cayman is not a shopper's paradise. Don't look for duty-free bargains or anything resembling a good selection of merchandise. What you will find are assorted small gift stores around the island, primarily at the resorts.

Resort Shops

At Little Cayman Beach Resort, **Mermaids** sells jewelry, Spanish coins, clothes, and gift items; the shop is open afternoons only, Monday through Saturday.

T-shirts and some souvenir items can be found at the grocery store and the small shop adjoining **McLaughlin's** rental agency in Blossom Village.

A small gift shop at **Pirates Point** sells a variety of items, including a Little Cayman cookbook prepared by Gladys Howard for the National Trust.

After Dark

Vacationers don't come to Little Cayman for the nightlife. Most simply rest up in preparation for the next day's dive. The best way to spend an evening is to enjoy a relaxing meal at one of the resorts, then go for a walk on the beach. Moonlit strolls through Blossom Village also make a good end to the day.

Little Cayman A to Z

Banks

Cayman National Bank has a branch on Little Cayman in Blossom Village on Guy Banks Road, ☎ 345-948-0051.

Emergencies

Medical. . . . . ☎ 911 or 555

Photo Lab

Reef Photo at Little Cayman Beach Resort offers rentals, film, and processing; ☎/fax 345-948-1063, or 800-327-3835, www.littlecayman.com/html_docs/reef-photo.htm.

Telephone Service

The **area code** for Little Cayman is ☎ **345**. Like Grand Cayman, Little Cayman also has service from AT&T, MCI Direct and US Sprint.

Calls within Little Cayman are charged a flat fee of 9¢ per minute. Calls between Little Cayman and Grand Cayman are 3¢ per minute. Calls between Little Cayman and Cayman Brac are 9¢ per minute.

Websites

Check out news and accommodations on the Sister Islands at the Department of Tourism's official website, **www.caymanislands.ky**. For dive information on Little Cayman, see the Department of Tourism's dive site, **www.divecayman.ky**.

Cayman Brac

While travelers may head to Grand Cayman for its bustling Seven Mile Beach or to Little Cayman for its quiet allure, Cayman Brac has its own unique assets and charms. This middle child of the Cayman Islands trio is increasingly known for its eco-tourism attractions that include world-class diving along undersea walls, hiking in the most rugged terrain found in the Cayman Islands, strolling the new system of **Heritage Sites and Trails**, exploring numerous caves, birding, sunning, and much more.

Its people are another of this island's true treasures. "Brackers are all nice and enjoy talking," explains Terri Scott, the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism representative on the island. "People come back often to the island because they feel welcomed and feel like they know people here."

We found that Cayman Brac was indeed a friendly destination. After a few hours on the island, we noticed how many residents stopped working in their gardens or stopped their conversation along the side of the road to wave to oncoming cars (still somewhat of a novelty on this tiny isle).

Cayman Brac has its own special qualities, assets that include world-class diving along undersea walls, hiking in the most rugged terrain found in the Cayman Islands, caves that tempt exploration, birding, and much more. The island is named for the "brac," Gaelic for bluff, which "soars" 140 feet up from the sea on the island's east end. It's the most distinct feature of this 12-mile-long, one-mile-wide island situated 89 miles east-northeast of Grand Cayman and just five miles from Little Cayman. With a population of only 1,300 residents, Cayman Brac is closer

in pace to Little Cayman than its big brother, Grand Cayman.

☛ DID YOU KNOW

Cayman Brac residents are known as Brackers.

Getting Here

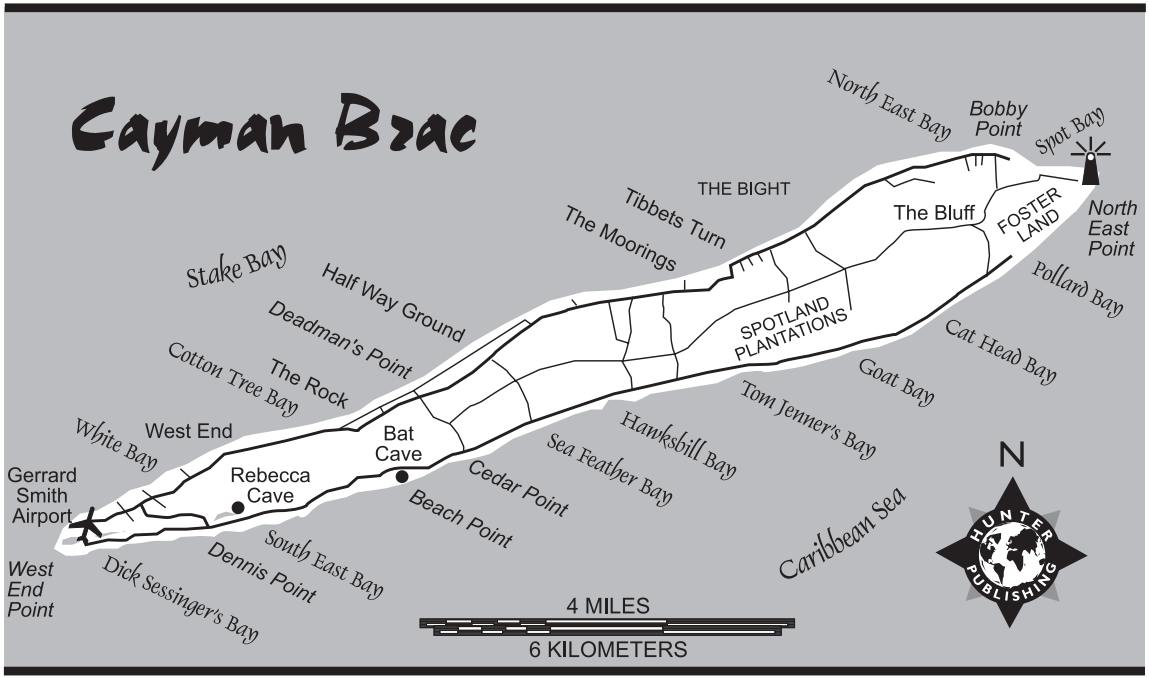
By Air

Direct flights to Cayman Brac's **Gerrard Smith Airport** are available from Miami, Tampa, Atlanta and Houston or from Grand Cayman aboard **Cayman Airways** (☎ 800-422-9626, from Canada 800-441-3003, www.caymanairways.com).

Twice-daily service from **Grand Cayman** is also provided on small prop planes with **Island Air** (☎ 345-949-5252, Monday through Friday, 9 am to 5 pm, fax 345-949-7044, www.islandair.ky). The 70-minute flight makes a brief stop in Little Cayman. Passengers may check up to 55 pounds of baggage free of charge; excess baggage is charged US 50¢ per pound.

Flights are also available on Island Air to Cayman Brac from **Little Cayman**. Special fares are offered for children under age 12.

Because of its proximity to the US, many private pilots also arrive by their own aircraft. If you are a private pilot, you'll find that Gerrard Smith airport is an official port of entry. For information on bringing your plane to the Cayman Islands (including how to get an overflight permit from the Cuban government), contact the Airport Officer, PO Box 58, West


Cayman Brac
North East Bay
Bobby Point
Spot Bay
THE BIGHT
Tibbets Turn
The Moorings
The Bluff
FOSTER LAND
North East Point
Stake Bay
Half Way Ground
Deadman's Point
SPOTLAND PLANTATIONS
Pollard Bay
Cat Head Bay
Cotton Tree Bay
The Rock
Goat Bay
Tom Jenner's Bay
White Bay
West End
Bat Cave
Hawksbill Bay
Sea Feather Bay
Gerrard Smith Airport
Rebecca Cave
Cedar Point
Beach Point
Caribbean Sea
South East Bay
Dennis Point
West End Point
Dick Sessinger's Bay
4 MILES
6 KILOMETERS
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING

End, Cayman Brac, British West Indies, ☎ 345948-1222, fax 345-948-1583.

Getting Around

On Wheels

Car & Jeep Rentals

A rental car is a must on this island; traffic is light, and you'll want to explore the caves, beaches, and communities of Brac.

On Cayman Brac, it's a good idea to make car reservations before your trip if possible. The number of rental cars is limited. Daily rental prices range from US $40-$45 for a Jeep and about US $30 for a compact car.

CAR RENTAL AGENCIES

Brac-Hertz Rent-a-Car . . . . . ☎ 345-948-1515 or www.bracrentals.com

B&S Motor Ventures . . . . . ☎ 345-948-1646 or www.bandsmv.com

Four D's Car Rental . . . . . ☎ 345-948-1599

T&D (Avis) Auto Rental. . . . . ☎ 800-228-0668 or 345-948-2847

Bicycle Rentals

Bicycles are another good way to get around this small island. **B&S Motor Ventures Cycle and Car Rentals** offers rental bicycles (☎ 345-948-1646, the_rock@candw.ky, www.bandsmv.com).

Orientation

You won't have difficulty exploring Cayman Brac on your own – that's half the fun! You can obtain a good road map from the **Department of Tourism** at the airport or from your car rental agency. If you get lost, just pull over and ask a local resident for directions.

You'll probably start your look at this long, eel-shaped island at Gerrard Smith Airport. The airport is on the island's westernmost end near a town named, appropriately enough, **West End**. This end of the island is also home to most guest accommodations and the island's only beaches.

You've basically got two routes around the island: **A6** (locals refer to it as the **North Side Road**) traces the northern coast, starting at West End and working past Knob Hill, Banksville, Half Way Ground, Molusca Heights, Tibbetts Turn, and Spot Bay, the most populated area of the island. Along the way, the road looks out on a sea that hides several good dive sites beneath its placid waters.

On this eastern end of the island, you'll see more traditional building styles; these were the first houses built on the island. Spot Bay is now constructing Heritage Park, an area that will recall the heritage of the island and offer nature tourism sites and trails. **Please update this text, it is identical to the wording in the 2001 *Adventure Guide***

Or you can take the southern route. On the southern shore, **A7** (usually called the **South Side Road**) traces its way from West End Point all the way northeast, journeying past the island's resorts – Brac Reef Beach Resort and Divi Tiara Beach Resort – past several good caves that are favorites with outdoor adventurers, and up to Pollard Bay.

A small center road (labeled **Ashton Reid Drive** on the maps but known as **Bluff Road** by residents) works through the center of the island, and this is the route to Cayman Brac's best known attraction: the bluffs or the Brac. From this road, turn east on the gravel **Major Donald Drive** (aka **Lighthouse Road**) and continue to the Parrot Reserve and the Lighthouse.

Best Places To Stay

ACCOMMODATIONS PRICE SCALE	
Price scale is based on a standard room for two persons, per night.	
Inexpensive	under $100
Moderate	$100-$200
Expensive	$201-$300
Deluxe	over $300

Resorts

BRAC CARIBBEAN BEACH VILLAGE
Stake Bay
☎ 345-948-2265, fax 345-948-1111
Reservations: ☎ 800-791-7911
www.caribbeancoast.com/nhotels/BracVillage
Moderate

This 16-room resort at Stake Bay offers air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TVs, as well as restaurant, bar, scuba, a dive shop, snorkeling, and tennis. Rooms here are sunny and decorated in Caribbean-style furnishings, with white rattan furni-

ture and island-inspired prints. This family-friendly resort is quiet and in easy walking distance of the new Carib Sands Beach Resort.

BRAC REEF BEACH RESORT

West End
☎ 345-948-1323, fax 345-948-1207
Reservations: ☎ 800-327-3835
www.bracreef.com
Moderate

This 40-room property is off Channel Bay on the island's southeast shore. Guest rooms have air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TVs, and porches or patios. The resort also includes a pool, Jacuzzi, restaurant, bar, scuba, dive shop, snorkeling, fishing, tennis, underwater photo center and gift shop.

CARIB SANDS BEACH RESORT

South Side
☎ 345-948-1121
www.caribesands.com
Moderate

This condominium resort has one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, all housed in coral pink buildings. Each unit has tile floors, full kitchens, and a pull-down Murphy bed. Cribs and playpens are available for families. A long dock provides not only access to fishing vessels but also shady places for quiet hammock time with a view of the shallow sea.

DIVI TIARA BEACH RESORT
Stake Bay
☎ 345-948-1553, fax 345-948-1316
Reservations: ☎ 800-367-3484
www.diviresorts.com
Moderate

Cayman Brac's largest resort offers 71 guest rooms, both standard and deluxe. Guest rooms have air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TVs, and porches or patios. The resort also includes a pool, Jacuzzi, restaurant, bar, scuba, an extensive dive shop, snorkeling, fishing, tennis, underwater photo center and gift shop.

The resort recently added men's and women's mountain bikes for active vacationers; guests can cycle to the store or head off to explore the island's sights. Bikes are complimentary and the resort also plans to add children's sized bicycles.

The Divi has also added new meal plan options for adults and children. The plans range from Divi Plan Two, which includes five breakfasts and two dinners ($134 per adult), to Divi Plan Four, which includes six breakfasts, six lunches, six dinners and six drinks per day ($570 per adult).

Villas

ALMOND BEACH HIDEAWAYS
Spot Bay
☎ 541-426-4863
Reservations: ☎ 800-972-9795
www.almondbeachhideaways.com
Moderate

These three villas are some of the newest on Cayman Brac. Each two- or three-bedroom unit houses between six and eight people. These beachfront accommodations offer air conditioning, ceiling fans,

telephones, TV, VCRs, kitchens, laundry facilities, barbecue grills, and more. Guest facilities include snorkeling, scuba diving, and fishing.

REEFSIDE RETREAT
Stake Bay
Reservations: ☎ 800-235-5888 (Cayman Villas)
www.caymanvillas.com
Moderate to Expensive

This cottage is situated right on a beach (albeit a pebble-strewn one) and offers lots of privacy. Up to four people can stay in the one-bedroom cottage. It has air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TV, kitchen, laundry facilities, maid service, and more.

Guest Houses

WALTON'S MANGO MANOR
Stake Bay
☎/fax 345-948-0518
waltons@candw.ky
Inexpensive

Cayman Brac's first bed and breakfast is within walking distance of the Cayman Brac Museum and the community of Stake Bay, and is only minutes from snorkeling and shore diving. Walton's Mango Manor is in an historic Caymanian house that formerly operated as a retirement home for Bracker seamen. Today it's a five-room guest house; rooms include air conditioning, ceiling fans, telephones, TV, and a private bath. A full breakfast is served daily. This B&B is a favorite with nature lovers. It is named for a large mango tree in the front yard. You'll also see guinep, breadfruit, buttonwood and poinciana trees. Guests have use of a barbecue and patio, as well as the microwave; rental bicycles are also available.

Best Places To Eat

Restaurants on Cayman Brac tend to be casual and feature local catches – and they're inexpensive to boot.

DINING PRICE SCALE	
Pricing includes one entrée, with glass of wine and coffee.	
Inexpensive	under $25
Moderate	$25-$40
Expensive	over $40

West End

On the West End, choices include **Aunt Sha's Kitchen** for Caymanian and American dishes (☎ 345-948-1581); **Edd's Place**, serving Caymanian, American and Chinese food (☎ 345-948-1208); and the **G&M Diner** (☎ 345-948-1272) for American dishes and more.

Stake Bay

At Stake Bay, **La Esperanza Restaurant and Bar** (☎ 345-948-0531) specializes in local seafood and also serves American dishes. **Mac's Place** (☎ 345-948-0372) offers casual dining.

White Bay

Sonia's Restaurant (☎ 345-948-1214) serves up a variety of dishes. You might also try the air-conditioned **Coral Garden Restaurant** at Brac

Reef Beach Resort (☎ 345-948-2265), which features gourmet specialties and local fare in a casual setting. **Captain's Table** (☎ 345-948-1418), at Brac Caribbean Reef Resort, is a casual restaurant serving lunch and dinner, either in the relaxed dining room or at poolside. The menu always includes a fresh fish and seafood dish along with popular favorites such as conch fritters. Sundays bring a popular buffet. There's also a **Domino's Pizza** (☎ 345-948-1266) near West End.

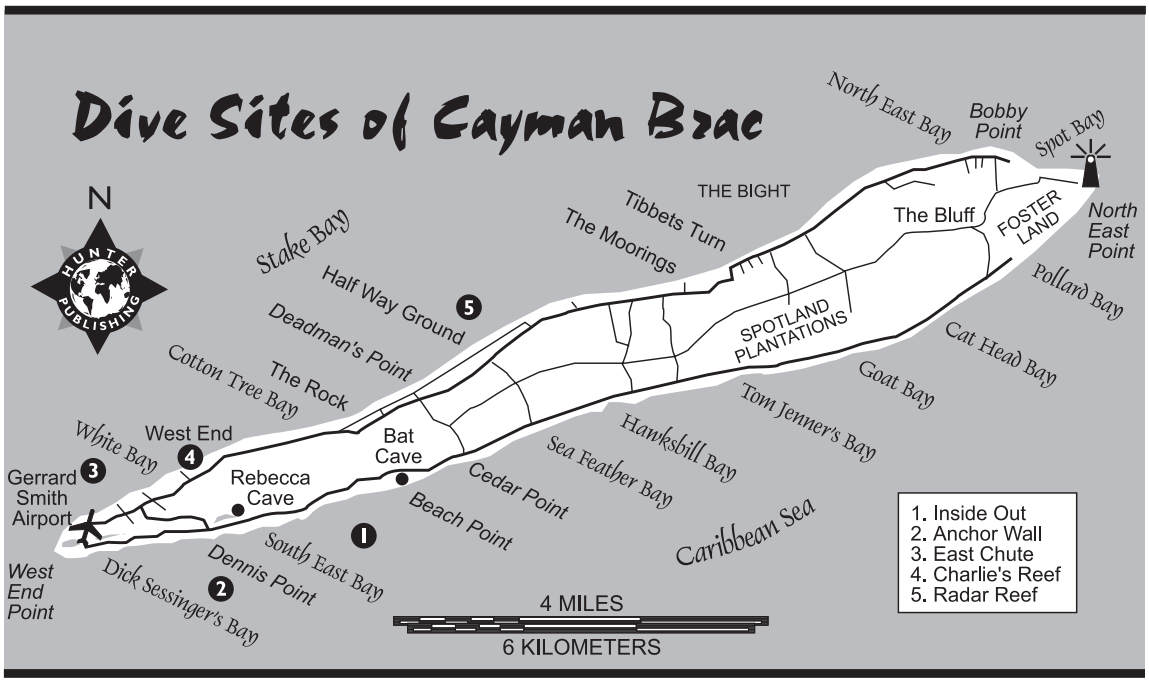
Sunup To Sundown

Beaches

Although Brac is notable for its seaside cliffs rather than its beaches, there are a couple of sandy areas. Along with the resort beaches, the **Public Beach** on the island's south side offers plenty of sunny solitude. Resort beaches are found at **Brac Reef Beach Resort** (see page 243).

Scuba Diving

Without a doubt, diving is one of the island's top attractions. Over 50 excellent dive sites tempt all levels of divers. The latest attraction is a Russian frigate deliberately sunk in September 1996. Renamed the MV *Captain Keith Tibbetts*, this 330-foot freighter was built for the Cuban navy. It lies approximately 200 yards offshore northwest of Cayman Brac. The bow rests in about 90 feet of water; the stern is just 40 feet below the surface. The sinking of the vessel was recorded by Jean-Michel Cousteau Productions in a documentary film called *Destroyer at Peace*. Before being sunk, the ship was modified and made safe for divers, who can now swim through


Dive Sites of Cayman Brac
N
HUNTER PUBLISHING
North East Bay
Bobby Point
Spot Bay
THE BIGHT
Tibbets Turn
The Moorings
The Bluff
FOSTER LAND
North East Point
Stake Bay
Half Way Ground
5
Deadman's Point
SPOTLAND PLANTATIONS
Pollard Bay
Cotton Tree Bay
The Rock
Cat Head Bay
Goat Bay
Tom Jenner's Bay
White Bay
West End
4
Bat Cave
Hawksbill Bay
Sea Feather Bay
Gerrard Smith Airport
3
Rebecca Cave
Cedar Point
Beach Point
Caribbean Sea
1
South East Bay
Dennis Point
West End Point
Dick Sessinger's Bay
2
4 MILES
6 KILOMETERS
1. Inside Out
2. Anchor Wall
3. East Chute
4. Charlie's Reef
5. Radar Reef

the upper three decks. The hull and lower decks cannot be entered, but divers can see into most of the ship, including the missile launcher, fore and aft deck cannons, and living quarters.

It doesn't take long for marine life to discover the additions to their underwater home; already divers are spotting eagle rays, stingrays, queen angelfish, filefish, four-eyed butterfly fish, puffer fish, batfish, snapper, red soldier fish, sergeant majors, French grunts, barracuda, jacks, and more.

Best Dive Sites

ANCHOR WALL

Located on the south side of the island off Dennis Point, this wall dive is considered intermediate level. Don't miss the anchor of an old Spanish galleon; it marks the entrance to a tunnel leading to a vertical wall that drops into the deep blue abyss.

CHARLIE'S REEF

On the north side of the island near Cotton Tree Bay, this 20- to 60-foot dive is a favorite with beginners and is named for a green moray eel who calls this home.

INSIDE OUT

This wall dive off South East Bay is a favorite with beginners because of its shallow (15- to 50-foot) depth. With coral heads, a tunnel, and plenty of marine life, it's a good choice for anyone.

RADAR REEF

Off Half Way Ground on the island's north side, this shallow dive can be reached from shore and is a favorite for night diving. Look for octopus!

EAST CHUTE

This all-level dive, on the north side of the island in White Bay, has something for everyone. Wreck di-

vers will find the remains of a 65-foot vessel in its waters; those looking for spectacular formations will find canyons and tunnels.

Dive & Snorkel Operators

BRAC AQUATICS LTD.
☎ 800-544-BRAC, 345-948-1429
www.candw.ky/users/cay3931

DIVE TIARA
☎ 800-661-DIVE

REEF DIVERS
☎ 800-327-3835, 345-948-1642
www.bracreef.com

VILLAGE SCUBA SCHOOL
☎ 345-948-1497
weedee@candw.ky

Snorkel Excursions

The wreck of the MV *Tibbetts* can be enjoyed by snorkelers. Just a short swim from shore, the wreck sits in 50-100 feet of water and is already home to a good selection of marine life.

Many dive operators also allow snorkelers to go out on some dives. Check with these operators for snorkel excursions:

Shelby Charters . . . . . ☎ 345-948-0535
Barefoot Watersports . . . . . ☎ 345-948-1299
Condor Watersports . . . . . ☎ 345-948-1226

Fishing

Bonefishing is a top draw for many Cayman Brac vacationers. Guides lead anglers on half- and full-day excursions to seek bonefish in the shallows.

Deep-sea fishing is another popular option and groups of up to four can book a charter for a chance at a trophy catch. Typically, fishing excursions cost $350 for a half-day of deep sea fishing and anywhere from $500-$600 for a full day.

Fishing Guides

BAREFOOT WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-948-1299, fax 345-948-1350
barefeet@candw.ky

BRAC CARIBBEAN BEACH VILLAGE
☎ 800-791-7911

CAPT. EDMUND "MUNNY" BODDEN
☎ 345-948-1228

CONDOR WATERSPORTS
☎ 345-948-1226, fax 345-948-2570
kirkconn@candw.ky

SHELBY CHARTERS
☎ 345-948-0535

Guided Tours

Nature Tours

T.J. SEVIK
☎ 345-948-2651, fax 345-948-2506

Ecotourists don't want to miss the opportunity to take a guided tour with local resident T.J. Sevik. These tours are free and can be customized to your own interests, whether bird-watching, caving, or identifying the island's flora. For arrangements contact Kenny Ryan or Mrs. Wanda Tatum at the numbers listed.

Taxi Tours

Guided tours are offered by several taxi companies on Cayman Brac. A guided half-day tour costs about US $30.

D&M TAXI-N-TOURS
Spot Bay
☎ 345-948-2307

Customized tours around the island, including the Bluff and the Lighthouse, are available through this company.

ELO'S TOURS AND TAXI SERVICE
The Bight
☎ 345-948-0220

This company offers guided tours around the island, including the caves. Trips to the lighthouse cost extra.

HILL'S TAXI
Spot Bay
☎ 345-948-0540

Tours of the caves, lighthouse, museum, and more.

MAPLE EDWARDS TAXI
Spot Bay
☎ 345-948-0395

Tours of various sites, including the museum, bluff, caves, and more.

Bird-watching

Bird-watching is a favorite activity on Cayman Brac. You'll find a self-guided tour at the **Parrot Reserve** (see *Sightseeing*, below). There are several

other good sites on the island where you might spot the West Indian whistling duck, one of which is the **Saltwater Pond** on the southwest coast.

During the winter months, birders can look for peregrine falcons. Other top birding times are the spring and winter migrations in February and March, as well as November and December. Birders are challenged by about 120 species, including the brown booby, Vitelline warbler, and the white-tailed tropicbird. For more information contact Wallace Platts, chairman of the National Trust's district committee at ☎ 345-948-2390.

Sightseeing

Caves

Cayman Brac's scenic bluff is pocked with caves that frame beautiful seaside views. Some guess that pre-Columbian Indian settlements used the caves; others say they were the lair of plundering pirates who used their dark recesses to hide their loot. During the Great Hurricane of 1932, these caves also offered shelter for many Brackers. Today several of the island's 18 caves have been explored and five are frequently enjoyed by vacationers.

REBECCA'S CAVE

Located east of Divi Tiara Hotel, this cave is marked with signs. The best-known of the island's caves, sadly this one is named for a young child who died here during the Great Hurricane of 1932.

PETER'S CAVE

Peter's Cave requires either a climb down a steep path or a hike downhill. From the cave's entrance, travelers can view the community of Spot Bay below.

Other challenges for spelunkers include **Skull Cave** (on the north coast near the high school and east of Faith Hospital), two-level **Bat Cave** (on the south side of the island and marked with signs), and, for those prepared for a steep climb, **Great Cave** (on the south side).

TIP

If you are interested in doing some caving, bring along a flashlight, a pair of old jeans, and good climbing shoes.

The Brac

The most recognized site on the island is the Brac, the sheer bluff that is visited by hikers and non-hikers alike. To reach the bluff, follow the gravel road north off Ashton Reid Road, the island crossroad. The gravel road runs six miles to a lighthouse. This area is a favorite with bird watchers. Here, the 180-acre **Parrot Reserve** (see page 256) is home to endangered Cayman Brac parrots. Only 400 of the birds remain in the wild on this island.

Cayman Brac Community Park

This park in the West End includes a short nature trail that identifies about 10 types of indigenous trees. The park is also home to a playset and is popular with families. It was dedicated by Governor Michael Gore in 1995. Stop by the Department of Tourism office adjacent to the park while you're in the neighborhood. Open daily. Free.

The Cayman Brac Museum

This charming museum at Stake Bay recalls the early history of seafaring on this island. Located in a building constructed in 1933, first as a bank, then customs office, treasury and finally post office, the museum includes an interesting exhibit about thatch rope making, once a popular craft using the island's silver thatch palm fronds. The museum also houses shipbuilding tools, photos, and even a replica of a turtle schooner. Hours: Monday through Friday from 9 am to noon and 1 to 4 pm, and on Saturday from 9 am to noon. ☎ 345-948-2622. Free.

Heritage Trails

Hikers and birders will also be interested in the new series of **Heritage Sites and Trails**. This extensive program of trails throughout the island was recently instituted by the Department of Tourism and includes 35 marked trails. Some are easy to reach while others require more hiking. Visitors can obtain a free map and brochure of the trails from the Department of Tourism office (adjacent to the Cayman Brac Community Park, ☎ 345-948-1849).

Sites include the **West End Point Overlook** on the South Side Road west of Brac Reef Beach Resort; this lookout is an easily accessible point and good for bird-watching, as well as the island's best sunset view. Nearby, the **Westerly Ponds** are good spots for watching wetlands birds. Boardwalks lead to a small viewing area. For hikers, the **Beach Walk to First Cay**, on the southeast shore at the southeast end of South Side Road, takes about two hours and follows the shoreline below the Bluff. Free.

Parrot Reserve

Cayman Brac's Parrot Reserve, set atop the Bluff, has a newly opened trail that is open to the public for self-guided tours. The trail is a mile long and takes hikers through the 180-acre Parrot Reserve, home to the endangered Cayman Brac parrot. The best time to spot the emerald green bird is July through September. They're often seen on top of the Bluff and around Stake Bay.

The Parrot Reserve is also a good destination for those interested in the flora and fauna of the island. Thirty-eight plant species can be seen here. Look for candlewood, mastic, wild banana orchid plants, and other exotic species.

Whether you visit the reserve to spot birds or plants, be sure to bring water; there are no facilities along the trail. Travelers should also wear long pants and good shoes for the trek, which traverses ironshore.

For more information, contact Wallace Platts, chairman of the Trust's district committee at ☎ 345-948-2390. Free.

Lighthouse

From the Parrot Reserve, continue traveling on Major Donald Drive east to the lighthouse at the end of the road (and high atop the Bluff; don't get too close to the edge!) There are actually two lighthouses at this point; an historic lighthouse and a newer model. Both are just lights atop tall towers, but the view from this area is dramatic.

What makes the view dramatic is the 140-foot-high Bluff, the highest point in the Cayman Islands. A trail weaves its way to the edge of the Bluff and provides excellent photo opportunities. Rocky paths

snake their way along the Bluff; wear hiking boots for this challenge.

Spa

TROPICAL TOUCH
Brac Reef Beach Resort
☎ 800-327-3835
www.bracreef.com

The laid-back Brac Reef Beach Resort is home to Tropical Touch, a spa facility with a variety of treatment options. Customized massages or body treatments are available, including deep tissue massage, relaxation massage, sea salt body polish, replenishing facials, and more. Guests can enjoy massages at the spa center or on the second level of the dock overlooking the Caribbean sea.

Underwater Photography

REEF PHOTO AND VIDEO CENTERS
Brac Reef Beach Resort
☎/fax 345-948-1340
reefoto@candw.ky

Established in 1984, this is the oldest full-service photo facility in the Sister Islands. The center offers rental equipment and instruction. Both 35mm and video cameras are available for rent. Additional lenses and flashes can also be rented.

Reef Photo offers several photo classes. A coaching session covering any aspect of photography – from wide-angle to maintenance of underwater cameras – is available, as is PADI certification as an underwater photographer (a three-day course). This course includes two rolls of film, processing, and critique sessions. A similar PADI Underwater Videographer course is also offered.

SITA PHOTO CHALLENGE
☎ 345-948-1033 or 345-948-1323
fax 345-948-1045
www.sisterislands.com

For travelers with a competitive spirit, the **Sister Islands Tourism Association**, or SITA, sponsors the annual SITA Photo Challenge on Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. Scheduled for late August, the contest is open to both professional and amateur photographers.

Shop Till You Drop

Kirk Freeport (☎ 345-948-2612) has a shop on Stake Bay with a selection of duty-free goods. The popular **Grand Cayman Company** (☎ 345-948-1517) also has a duty-free shop at the airport for last-minute jewelry, perfume, or gift purchases.

Cayman Brac A to Z

Banks

Cayman National Bank at Tibbetts Square, Cross Road at West End, ☎ 345-948-1551, offers banking services and an ATM.

Credit Cards

Visa, MasterCard, American Express, and Diners Club are commonly accepted at larger establishments; Discover is accepted at some stores.

Dentists

There's a dental clinic on Cayman Brac; ☎ 345-948-2618.

Emergencies

Medical. . . . . ☎ 911 or 555

Hospital

Faith Hospital (☎ 345-948-2356) at Stake Bay has 16 patient beds and an emergency room facility.

Brac Clinic, ☎ 345-948-1777.

Photo Labs

You'll find film and processing services at **Fast Foto** on Cotton Tree Bay (☎ 345-948-1322).

Brac Reef Beach Resort (see page 243) also has an underwater photo shop with rentals, film, and processing on-site; ☎ 345-948-1340, reefoto@candw.ky.

Websites

You'll find information about Cayman Brac on the **Cayman Department of Tourism** website, www.caymanislands.ky.

Diving off Cayman Brac is explored on the dive site operated by the **Department of Tourism,** www.divecayman.ky.

Appendix

Booklist

Bioni, Joan and Brian Bell. *Insight Guide to the Cayman Islands.* Insight Guides, 2002.

Bradley, P. *Birds of the Cayman Islands.* Caerulea Press, 1995.

Brunt, M.A., ed. *The Cayman Islands: Natural History and Biogeography*. Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995.

Cancelmo, Jesse. *Diving Cayman Islands*. Aqua Quest Publications, Inc. 1997.

Dailey, Barbara Currie. *Tortuga Rum Fever and Caribbean Party Cookbook*. Island Fever Press, 2000.

Frink, Stephen (Photographer), William Harrigan. T*he Cayman Islands: Dive Guide.* Abbeville Press, 1999.

Harper, Skip. *Adventuring on Cayman Brac: A Guide to Great Adventures on this Small Caribbean Gem.* Heel and Toe Pub., 2002.

Hayne, Tricia. *Cayman Islands.* Bradt Travel Guides, 2001.

Lumry, Amanda, Loren Wengerd, and Laura Hurwitz. *Cayman: A Photographic Journey Through the Islands*. Vista Press, 2000.

O'Keefe, M. Timothy. *Sea Turtles: The Watchers' Guide*. Larson's Outdoor Publications, 1995.

Permenter, Paris and John Bigley. *Adventure Guide to the Cayman Islands*. Hunter Publishing, 2001.

Philpott, Don. *Landmark Visitors Guide to the Cayman Islands*. Hunter Publishing, 2002.

Pierce, Jean and Kris Newman. *Cayman Islands: Diving and Snorkeling*. Lonely Planet, 1999.

Pitcairn, Feodor U. and Paul Hummann. *Cayman: Underwater Paradise*. Reef Dwellers Press, 1979.

Potter, Betty. *Grand Recipes from the Cayman Islands*. Potter Publications, 1985.

Raultbee, Paul G., comp. *Cayman Islands.* ABC-CLIO, Inc., 1996.

Roessler, Carl. *Diving and Snorkeling Guide to the Cayman Islands*. Gulf Publishing Co., 1993.

Sauer, Jonathan D. *Cayman Islands Seashore Vegetation: A Study in Comparative Biogeography*. Books on Demand (University of California Publications in Entomology), 1982.

Smith, Roger C. and James C. Bradford. *The Maritime Heritage of the Cayman Islands*. University Press of Florida, 2000.

Terry, Lindsay. *Grand Cayman: Colourful Reflections of Yesteryear.* Grand Cayman, 2000.

Trout, Richard E. *Cayman Gold: Lost Treasure of Devils Grotto* (children's book). Langmarc Publishers, 1999.

Wood, Lawson. *Dive Sites of the Cayman Islands.* NTC Publishing Group, 1997.

Websites

The popularity of the Cayman Islands has spawned a wealth of websites. Throughout the book, we've included Internet addresses for businesses, accommodations, and attractions wherever possible. This appendix includes websites that offer helpful material about the islands, island activities, and accommodations.

General

Department Of Tourism
www.caymanislands.ky

This is the official site of the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. It has Cayman news and current weather conditions, as well as tourism information, including hotels and condominiums, restaurants, transportation, attractions, fishing, scuba diving, snorkeling, group and meeting facilities, watersports, information on the Sister Islands, visitor services, links to other Cayman sites, an e-mail link to the DOT and a brochure request form.

Dive Cayman
www.divecayman.ky

This is the official dive site operated by the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism. It includes live information about weather, an interactive dive map, free dive screensavers, dive news, and brochures for download. Visitors can also sign up for the *E-Buddy*, an e-mail newsletter with information on Cayman dive news.

Trip Planning

Travel Facts
www.travelfacts.com/tfacts/htm/gcm/gcmdest.htm

A wealth of information on the Cayman Islands, including a calendar of events, history, sightseeing and side trips, maps, sports, beaches, other activities, hotel guide, dining guide, shopping, activities, and travel tips.

Island Features
www.cayman.org

Information on transportation, accommodations, what's new, watersports, and a short picture tour of the island.

Reservations
www.destination.ky

You can make accommodations reservations online at this site. A neat feature is a WebCam connection to the turtle farm so you can see what's going on right now.

Caribbean Dreams
www.silvanaus.com/travel.htm

This site is operated by Destination Management and Reservations Services. Here you can make online accommodation reservations and get information on dive packages, wedding planning and more.

Shopping & Information
http://caribbean-supersite.com/cayman

Learn about shopping, news, business, excursions and the national symbols of these islands on this site.

Resources
www.caymansonline.com

Resources for each of the islands on diving, hotels, snorkeling, fishing and more.

Author site
www.parisandjohn.com

Check here for information on our latest finds in the Cayman Islands, an e-mail link to tell us about your most recent discoveries, and photos from our island excursions.

Airlines

Cayman Airways . . . . . www.caymanairways.com
Island Air . . . . . www.islandair.ky

Attractions

Atlantis Submarine
www.atlantisadventures.com

Nautilus: The Undersea Tour
www.nautilus.ky

Cayman Islands National Museum
www.museum.ky

Queen Elizabeth II Botanic Park
www.botanic-park.ky

Pedro St. James National Historic Site
www.pedrostjames.ky

Business

Services
www.caymans.net

Accounting firms, banking, captive insurance, company formation, mutual funds, real estate, ship and yacht registration and trustee services.

Port Authority
www.caymanport.com/index.htm

The Cayman Islands Port Authority operates this site, which includes cruise ship schedules, port business, and attractions; you can also send a Cayman postcard from the site.

Island Products
www.rumshop.net

This is the place to learn more about Cayman's rums or the products of other Caribbean islands.

RBC Dominion Securities
www.rbcds.com

Information about offshore investments.

Festivals

Pirates Week Festival
www.piratesweekfestival.com

Cayman Madness SCUBA
www.caymanmadness.ky

Historic & Natural Preservation

National Trust . . . www.caymannationaltrust.org

A wealth of information on environmental and historic programs throughout the islands.

Recreation

Pampered Ponies . . . . . www.ponies.ky

Red Sail Sports . . . . . www.redsail.com

Dive Information . . . . . www.divecayman.ky

Official dive site of the Cayman Islands Department of Tourism.

Scuba Information . . . . . www.destination.ky

Ocean Frontiers Scuba . www.oceanfrontiers.com

Information on dive sites and accommodations specifically for divers, plus a link to weather.

Real Estate

Century 21
www.century21cayman.com

Information and listings for those who are considering Cayman as a first or second home.

Go Beach
www.gobeach.com/cayman/

Information on villas, a map of Grand Cayman, travel tips on the Cayman Islands, and more.

Re/Max Cayman Islands
www.dreamfinders.com

Coldwell Banker Cayman Islands Realty
www.caymanislandsrealty.com

Cayman Islands Real Estate Brokers Association
www.cireba.com

ERA
www.eracayman.com

Crighton Properties Ltd
www.crightonproperties.com

Lund Real Estate
www.remax-cayman.com

Underwater Photography

Cathy Church's Sunset Underwater Photo Centre
www.cathychurch.com

Don Foster's Ocean Photo
www.donfosters.com

Fisheye Photographic Services
www.fisheye.com

Weddings

Celebrations
www.celebrations.ky

Cayman Weddings
www.cayman.com.ky/visiting/index.htm